



# Political Christianity: Internal Organization, Preferences and Church Political Activity

## Citation

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Political Christianity:  
Internal Organization, Preferences and Church Political Activity

A dissertation presented  
by  
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to  
The Department of Government

in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
in the subject of  
Political Science

Harvard University  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

November 2014



Political Christianity:  
Internal Organization, Preferences and Church Political Activity

Abstract

This dissertation examines the role of internal structure of religious organizations in influencing these organizations' interactions with incumbent governments and ultimately determining the political activities of religious groups. This dissertation fits within a body of literature known as the political economy of religion. I expand upon this literature by examining religious groups in terms of internal organization, focusing on Christian churches in Africa, with Kenya as my primary case country.

The central argument of this dissertation is that churches (national-level denominations) with certain organizational features – centralized leadership, authoritarian decision-making procedures, and lack of internal accountability mechanisms – are more likely to have friendlier interactions with governments and therefore tend to adopt more pro-government political stances compared to churches that lack these features. This relationship operates through two mechanisms. First, centralized churches possess negotiation advantages over decentralized churches. Second, centralized, authoritarian churches can more easily be co-opted by incumbent governments. The dissertation also expand upon existing literature by offering a fuller and more nuanced understanding of the preferences of governments and churches vis-à-vis one another, proposing that churches seek to maximize number of church members, member faithfulness, and resources, while governments seek ideological support, citizen mobilization, and social service provision from churches.

These arguments are examined by historical comparative case studies of five of the largest Christian denominations in Kenya over the course of the country's first three post-independence presidents. Through qualitative historical analysis, combined with information gathered through fieldwork in Kenya, the dissertation demonstrates how the preferences of these churches and governments, mediated through the internal organizations of the churches, influenced church-state relations and ultimately determined the churches' political stances. The impact of internal organization is greater than factors such as ethnicity or theological conservatism/liberalism.

The dissertation tests these arguments through a quantitative analysis of church political orientation using national-level data on Christian churches and countries across Africa from independence through 2010. The results of the statistical analyses show significant effects of organizational features such as centralization, consistent with the arguments made concerning Kenya. The dissertation then gives brief qualitative analysis of church-state relations for several of the African churches included in the quantitative dataset.

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## **List of Acronyms**

ACK	Anglican Church of Kenya
AIC	Africa Inland Church
AICs	African Initiated Churches
AIPCA	Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa
CCEA	Christian Churches' Educational Association
CDF	Constituency Development Fund
CKRC	Constitution of Kenya Review Commission
CMS	Church Missionary Society
CPK	Church of the Province of Kenya
CSM	Church of Scotland Mission
EFK	Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya
EAK	Evangelical Alliance of Kenya
FORD	Forum of the Restoration of Democracy
GEMA	Gikuyu, Embu and Meru Association
ICPA	International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KEC	Kenya Episcopal Conference
KISA	Kikuyu Independent School Association
KPU	Kenya People's Union
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAK	National Alliance Party of Kenya
NARC	National Rainbow Coalition
NBC	Nairobi Baptist Church
NCCK	National Christian Council of Kenya
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PCEA	Presbyterian Church of East Africa
PNU	Party of National Unity
SDA	Seventh-Day Adventist

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my dissertation committee – Professors Robert Bates, Nahomi Ichino, and Jacob Olupona – for all their help advising, pushing, encouraging, critiquing, and generally supporting me during this process. I also thank Professor Jens Meierhenrich for advising my dissertation prospectus alongside the professors mentioned above.

Throughout the course of my graduate school career, I have received feedback, advice and encouragement from a number of faculty and graduate students in workshops and informal discussions. At the risk of accidentally omitting some of the many people who helped me along the way, I must thank the following: Professors Susan Pharr, Daniel Ziblatt, Prerna Singh, Arthur Spirling, James Alt, Jeffrey Frieden, Michael Hiscox, and Grzegorz Ekiert as well as the following people who gave me advice as (at the time) fellow graduate students: Janet Lewis, Claire Schwartz, Kristen Looney, Andy Harris, Meghan Ferrer, Sarah Shehabuddin, Amanda Garrett, Emily Clough, Catherine Kelly, Rich Nielsen, Jennifer Howk, Meg Rithmire, Yuki Takagi and James Huguley.

I cannot give enough thanks to my lovely and brilliant wife, Christalyn Sims Rhodes, whose love, encouragement, editing, feedback, inspiration and overall support have been crucial to this process, and to my life and general. She and our incredible daughters, Zoë and Jordan, are the loves of my life and have given me the drive to write and research. Having painstakingly researched, written and revised this dissertation involving the activities of Christian churches, the appropriate way to end my acknowledgments is with a simple word: Hallelujah!

## Chapter 1: Explaining Church Political Activity

### 1 Introduction

Understanding the various groups and organizations that mediate the relationships between individuals and states has been one of the major goals of political science. In most modern states that offer at least a semblance of public choice, political parties play a key role in this process, yet parties are but one category of organizations that serve as intermediaries between the people and the state.<sup>1</sup> Civil society, broadly defined, includes these various organizations that impact citizens' political involvement and interactions with the government.<sup>2</sup> Various special interest groups lobby the state on behalf of a subset of citizens in order to gain special considerations and privileges for themselves or others. Such organizations take a myriad of forms: trade associations, professionalized advocacy organizations, ethnic associations, mass social movements, even soccer clubs.<sup>3</sup> While the goals of these groups may vary – some seek economic or political concessions for their own members, others work to gain civil and political protection for disadvantaged or marginalized groups, while yet others seek to transform the political system or to change who occupies the top seats of political power—all of these groups and organizations play important roles in interacting with governments and states.

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<sup>1</sup> Huntington refers to the political party as “the distinctive institution of modern politics. Huntington, Samuel P. *Political Order in Changing Societies*. Yale University Press, 2006:90

<sup>2</sup> Fowley and Edwards raise questions concerning the ability of civil society to serve as counterweights to authoritarian and democratic governments alike Foley, Michael W., and Bob Edwards. "The Paradox of Civil Society." *Journal of Democracy* 7.3 (1996): 38-52.

<sup>3</sup> For one example of the political roles that soccer clubs can play, see Shobe, Hunter. "Football and the Politics of Place: Football Club Barcelona and Catalonia, 1975–2005." *Journal of Cultural Geography* 25.1 (2008): 87-105.

Because of the power that such groups wield, governments often seek to influence, coopt or control these groups.<sup>4</sup> The members and leaders of these groups, meanwhile, face dilemmas between maintaining independence while being able to achieve the groups' goals in interactions (harmonious or conflictual) with governments, or accepting some level of cooptation in exchange for the benefits of access to the state.<sup>5</sup>

Religious organizations, such as Christian churches, have long been among the most important forms of civil society throughout the world, playing a variety of functions attributed to the secular organizations described above. Churches lobby for special privileges for their own members and leaders and also advocate for various social policies that affect all citizens (or even non-citizen residents) of a particular country alike. Churches engage in civic education and mass mobilization around political issues, including elections and other forms of government or regime change. As Huntington notes, churches were instrumental in opposing authoritarian governments in countries as varied as South Korea, the Philippines, and El Salvador; churches in African nations such as Malawi and Zimbabwe have also stood up to their governments when other forms of dissent were repressed.<sup>6</sup> On the other hand, many churches have developed close,

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<sup>4</sup> Harbeson briefly reviews the concept of civil society cooptation in the works of seminal political theorists such as Montesquieu, Gramsci, Marx and Tocqueville. Harbeson, John. "Civil Society and Political Renaissance in Africa." *Civil Society and the State in Africa*. Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers (1994): 19.

<sup>5</sup> This dilemma is exacerbated in political circumstances in which independent civil society organizations face repression. See Gyimah-Boadi, Emmanuel. "Civil Society in Africa." *Journal of Democracy* 7.2 (1996): 126.

<sup>6</sup> Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1993. p73-81; Newell, Jonathan. "'A Moment of Truth'? The Church and Political Change in Malawi, 1992." *The Journal of Modern African*

mutually supportive relationships with a number of governments; the Russian Orthodox Church under Vladimir Putin and Ethiopian Orthodox Church under Meles Zenawi provide recent examples of churches allying closely with secular rulers.<sup>7</sup> Various churches supported the MRND government of Rwanda even during the 1994 genocide. In still other examples, churches served as peacemakers between opposing factions in a number of countries, including Angola, the Dominican Republic and Mozambique.<sup>8</sup>

What determines the political orientation of churches? That is, why do some national-level Christian denominations support incumbent governments, while other churches oppose sitting governments, and yet others take neutral positions, for example by mediating between governments and opposition forces or by choosing to abstain from political involvement altogether? My dissertation addresses this question by examining the political stances of several Christian denominations over time in Kenya, a country in which the major churches have engaged in politics throughout the country's history, varying in their political stances across denomination and over time. Through original interviews and observations, as well as examination of numerous primary and secondary

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*Studies* 33.02 (1995): 243-262; Dorman, Sara Rich. "“Rocking the Boat?”: Church-NGOs and Democratization in Zimbabwe." *African Affairs* 101.402 (2002): 75-92.

<sup>7</sup> Lomagin, Nikita. "Interest Groups in Russian Foreign Policy: The Invisible Hand of the Russian Orthodox Church." *International Politics* 49.4 (2012): 506-508; Haustein, Jörg, and Terje Østebø. "EPRDF's Revolutionary Democracy and Religious Plurality: Islam and Christianity in post-Derg Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5.4 (2011): 760-761.

<sup>8</sup> Betances, Emelio. "Catholic Church and Political Mediation in the Dominican Republic: A Comparative Perspective, The." *J. Church & St.* 46 (2004): 341; Haynes, Jeffrey. "Conflict, Conflict Resolution and Peace-building: The Role of Religion in Mozambique, Nigeria and Cambodia." *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics* 47.1 (2009): 52-75; Toft, Monica Duffy, Daniel Philpott, and Timothy Samuel Shah. *God's Century: Resurgent Religion and Global Politics*. WW Norton & Company, 2011: 189-191.

documents covering the periods of the first three Presidents since independence, this dissertation uses the cases of the Kenyan churches to refine existing understandings of the circumstances under which churches will support or oppose existing governments.<sup>9</sup> My dissertation explains the variation in church support for government by examining not only the preferences of the relevant actors – churches as organizations, church leaders as individuals, and governments, particularly heads of state – but also by examining differences in the internal organizations of churches that influence how preferences are translated into actions. The arguments presented here have implications for understanding not only the political orientations of African churches, but for understanding how civil society organizations more generally engage in politics. Churches are generally viewed, accurately, as organizations that are incomparably driven by beliefs and ideological considerations. Nevertheless, churches and other religious groups are still social organizations, and if “secular” structural features significantly influence their political stances, gaining a greater understanding of how structure impacts political activities will have implications for studying nonreligious organizations as well.

My central contention is that internal decision-making and leadership structures of churches play a much larger role in determining church political stances than has been previously identified in the literature on church political activities. Specifically, churches with more concentrated and authoritarian leadership are more likely to support incumbent governments, all else being equal. This relationship between internal structure and

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<sup>9</sup> The heads of state of Kenya since independence have been: Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978), Daniel arap Moi (1978-2002), and Mwai Kibaki (2002-2013), and Uhuru Kenyatta (2013-present).

political orientation operates through two mechanisms. First, centralized leadership allows churches to more easily negotiate with governments. A single individual can channel preferences into a coherent set of political stances and demands and present these to governments. Governments can more easily negotiate with a single leader, directly or through that leaders' designated representatives, than they can with multiple church leaders who all claim to speak for their organizations. Second, the existence of a single national leader allows governments to better target that leader with carrots and sticks in order to gain compliance. These effects of leadership centralization – negotiating advantage and cooptability – are enhanced if churches also feature authoritarian decision-making structures and lack significant checks and balances or accountability measures for their leaders. A single leader who has ultimate decision-making authority within his church can make credible commitments during negotiations with government officials, without either side having to worry that the agreements made will be vetoed by others within the church. Furthermore, a church leader who faces little threat of censure from within his organization can accept government benefits or yield to government pressure with less fear of negative consequences when compared to a church leader who can be reprimanded or removed if he strikes a personally beneficial deal that does not meet with his church's approval.

Political science has lagged behind other disciplines such as sociology in recognizing religious actors as rational actors. Churches, and specifically church leaders, choose actions to maximize their own utilities based on a set of clear preferences. As is the case for other rational actors, it is important to understand the preferences of churches as organizations, and church leaders as individuals, yet political science literature has not

yet fully fleshed out these preferences. In addition, governments have specific preferences vis-à-vis religious organizations, and these preferences form the basis for interactions between the two sets of actors, even if the links between actors' preferences and political outcomes are mediated by the internal structures of religious organizations in the ways summarized above. The second main goal of this dissertation is to properly identify the preferences of churches and governments in order to better understand relations between these two actors. Consistent with other works, I argue that churches are mainly concerned with maximizing members and resources, but unlike previous works, I argue that membership maximization has separate and sometimes conflicting components of member quantity and member faithfulness. These organizational goals factor into the preferences of church leaders, but leaders also have private incentives related to their own material wellbeing, social standing and private morality.

Governments, meanwhile, seek churches to provide ideological justifications for citizens to comply with political rulers, which decreases the cost to government of ruling. In addition to just desiring compliance from citizens, governments often need to actively mobilize citizens for purposes including political campaigns and voting. Finally, churches often operate as service providers in fields such as healthcare and education, and both developed and developing country governments find it useful to cooperate with churches in providing such services. Government preferences for these three church “products” – ideology, mobilization, and service provision – will vary based on the capabilities of the government and the availability of substitute goods from other sources. Even when church structure inclines churches to offer support to government, such support may not materialize if the government does not express demand for the church’s “products” and is



therefore unwilling to offer acceptable compensation to the church or its leader(s).

Other political and social factors remain relevant for influencing the political positions taken by churches, such as government performance on political and economic issues, and – as is often the case in African politics – ethnic and regional considerations. My dissertation maintains that these secular concerns influence churches as well, just as they affect nonreligious organizations. However, contrary to analyses that give primacy to ethnic considerations, I argue that the presence of permissive leadership structures and decision-making rules within churches has the power to facilitate church-state cooperation even in instances when the ethnic compositions of churches and governments would predict conflict.

The rest of this chapter proceeds as follows. Section 2 presents a literature review, highlighting social science analyses of religious organizations, particularly Christian churches, as part of a small but vibrant body of literature that studies the “political economy of religion.” Section 3 draws upon the literature and research in Kenya to identify the relevant actors involved in influencing church-state interactions and church political orientations and details the variables that factor into these actors’ preferences. Section 4 lays out the main arguments of the dissertation, identifying the roles of internal church organization in influencing how actors’ preferences translate into interactions between churches and governments and subsequently into church political orientations. Section 5 concludes by identifying the churches that will be used as case studies in this work and summarizing the subsequent chapters of the dissertation.

## 2 Literature Review

### 2.1 Political Economy of Religion and Church Political Activity

Despite the importance of Christian churches and other religious organizations in politics, social science has often viewed religion as operating outside of conventional ideas of rational behavior, leaving religious organizations understudied by political scientists in particular. Nevertheless, some scholars have responded to the assumption of religious irrationality by using rational choice logic to produce careful and important analyses of the political and economic activities of religious actors.

The political economy of religion literature can trace its origins at least as far back as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, in which Smith discusses the politics of religious regulation, noting the greater efforts and competitive edge of clergy representing new sects over those employed by established religions.<sup>10</sup> Though not nearly as well cited as Smith's secular economic analyses, the treatment of religion in *Wealth of Nations* contains several lines of thought that would be revived in late 20<sup>th</sup> Century works. Smith described, among other aspects of religion: a narrative of how certain sects become "established churches", officially endorsed and sanctioned by the state; the strategies of established churches to seek from the state both regulations that restrict competing religious organizations and subsidies for the established church; and conditions under

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<sup>10</sup> Smith, Adam. *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*. Edited by S. M. Soares. MetaLibri Digital Library, May 29, 2007. [http://www.ibiblio.org/ml/libri/s/SmithA\\_WealthNations\\_p.pdf](http://www.ibiblio.org/ml/libri/s/SmithA_WealthNations_p.pdf). Accessed September 23, 2014. For a discussion of Adam Smith's treatment of religion in Book V, see Ekelund, Robert B., Robert F. Hébert, and Robert D. Tollison. "Adam Smith on Religion and Market Structure." *History of Political Economy* 37.4 (2005): 647-660.

which established churches would switch their allegiance from supporting incumbent governments to supporting political rivals of the sitting rulers.<sup>11</sup>

In more recent literature, economists Robert B. Ekelund, Jr, Robert F. Hébert, and Robert D. Tollison found analytical traction in their study of the medieval Catholic Church by viewing it as a monopoly firm that “in return for a variety of payments, not all monetary,...dispensed such goods as ritual, solace, appeasement, status, and ultimately, salvation.”<sup>12</sup> Ekelund et al. use economic analysis to reinterpret a number of practices of the medieval Church, including prohibitions on usury, in terms of profit maximization.

Stathis Kalyvas focuses on the political side of the political economy of religion, examining the preferences and actions of the Catholic Church in eighteenth century Europe that led to the creation of Christian Democrat parties.<sup>13</sup> At this point in history, the Catholic Church in several countries viewed itself as under attack by the anticlerical policies of new Liberal governments. Unable to negotiate with the Liberals and faced with a loss of privileges, including control over education, the Church chose to launch a social and political strategy whereby Catholics were mobilized through mass lay organizations in order to oppose Liberal policies and support politicians from Conservative parties who pledged to restore Church privileges. It was these mass organizations that, facing unexpected levels of electoral success for the candidates these

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<sup>11</sup> Smith 2007: 608-615.

<sup>12</sup> Ekelund, Robert B., Robert F. Hébert, and Robert D. Tollison. "An Economic Model of the Medieval Church: Usury as a Form of Rent Seeking." *Journal of Law, Economics, & Organization* 5.2 (1989): 307-331.

<sup>13</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. *The Rise of Christian Democracy in Europe*. Cornell University Press, 1996.

organizations supported, quickly evolved into political parties despite the wishes of the Church to demobilize them instead.

Carolyn Warner picks up the analysis of the Catholic Church's relationships with Christian Democracy by examining the Church's choice of political partners in mid-twentieth century Europe.<sup>14</sup> She emphasizes an analogy found in Kalyvas that views the Church as akin to a special interest group seeking rents and preferential legislation from governments. The Church, Warner argues, chooses to support a political party from among several options based on the Church's evaluation of which party is most likely to deliver desired policy concessions to the Church.

Both Kalyvas and Warner focus on the Catholic Church choosing a particular political ally from among competing politicians in multi-party European democracies. Gill takes up the question of Catholic Church political support in the context of the authoritarian political systems of Latin America in the latter half of the twentieth century.<sup>15</sup> As the national Catholic Churches tended to support authoritarian governments in Latin America, Gill seeks to explain why some but not all national Catholic hierarchies ended such support in the 1970s and 1980s. Gill finds his answer in the rise of Pentecostal Christian churches in some countries in Latin American countries. In the countries where Pentecostal churches took roots and expanded in membership, primarily by drawing away poorer Catholics, the Catholic Church responded to this challenge to its

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<sup>14</sup> Warner, Carolyn M. *Confessions of an Interest Group: the Catholic Church and Political Parties in Europe*. Princeton University Press, 2000.

<sup>15</sup> Gill, Anthony. *Rendering unto Caesar: the Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*. University of Chicago Press, 1998.

social and religious hegemony by adopting pro-poor political stances, which included speaking out against the conservative dictatorships and their anti-poor policies. National Catholic churches existing in countries without significant Pentecostal movements did not face competitive pressures and remained supportive of authoritarian governments.

Kalyvas, Gill and Warner all view the Church as a unitary actor, and equate the actions of the Church's leadership, namely its archbishops and bishops, as equivalent to the actions of the church itself. Kalyvas views the entire transnational Catholic Church as a single actor, with the leadership in the Vatican as decisive.<sup>16</sup> Gill and Warner both modify this stipulation by viewing the national-level Catholic Church of each country as an independent, unitary actor "with its own history, structure, leadership, and political interests" which often differ from the interests of the Vatican.<sup>17</sup>

Kalyvas, Gill and Warner also attempt to identify the preferences of the Church. Kalyvas is somewhat vague concerning the Church's preferences, stating that it sought to "maximiz[e] power, generally conceived as its ability to shape or influence society", though the author notes that the most pressing policy issue for the church was maintaining its privileged position in providing education.<sup>18</sup> Warner offers a refined list of preferences of religious organizations, arguing that they "seek to maximize their market share, measured by influence, number of believers, and amount of revenue."<sup>19</sup> Gill offers the clearest and most precise statement of church preferences, stating that

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<sup>16</sup> Kalyvas 1996: 31-33.

<sup>17</sup> Warner 2000: 8; see also Gill 1998: 9.

<sup>18</sup> Kalyvas, 1996: 26

<sup>19</sup> Warner 2000: 28.

religious leaders seek to maximize parishioners (or at least minimize parishioner loss) and maximize resources, with resource maximization largely serving the instrumental purpose of enabling the church to operate and convert more members.<sup>20</sup> Given the Church's preferences for maximizing members and resources, Gill and Warner both agree with Adam Smith that the two most pressing demands that churches make of governments are to restrict competing religious or ideological groups from entering or efficiently operating in the religious marketplace, and to provide subsidies to the favored church.

## ***2.2 Church Political Activity in Africa***

Despite advances made in the literature, the theoretical understanding of religious actors remains incomplete, partially because the theory has largely been built on a limited set of empirical cases. Much of the literature in the political economy of religion school focuses on the Catholic Church, which has unique organizational and historical features that set it apart from other religious organizations.<sup>21</sup> In addition, most of the theory-driven analysis has focused on high and middle-income countries, particularly the US, Europe and Latin America. In contrast, much of the work on church-state relations in the developing world, and Africa in particular, tends to be historical accounts and case studies, which are often rich in detail but theoretically light.

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<sup>20</sup> Gill 1998: 55-56. Given that churches need monetary resources and effort from church clergy and/or members to recruit new members, church growth can be modeled as a function of monetary and human capital. See for example Iannaccone, Laurence R., Daniel VA Olson, and Rodney Stark. "Religions Resources and Church Growth." *Social Forces* 74.2 (1995): 705-731.

<sup>21</sup> Bellin, Eva. "Faith in Politics. New Trends in the Study of Religion and Politics." *World Politics* 60.02 (2008): 326.

The lack of theory-driven research on the political economy of religion in Africa is especially jarring given the historical and current prominence of religious organizations, which are among the largest and most impactful civil society organizations in many African nations.<sup>22</sup> Catholic and mainline Protestant Christian denominations persist as prominent mass organizations and social actors in Africa, as do Islamic groups. Newer Christian churches of the Pentecostal and evangelical traditions have exploded in membership and notoriety across Africa, often drawing membership from older religious organizations. Collectively, religious organizations still provide a significant amount of education and health services across the continent.<sup>23</sup> Religion is thus a very powerful social force in Africa, begging for greater theoretical analysis. For non-Africanist scholars, Africa provides an unexplored set of cases for testing and revising existing theories of church-state relations and political economy of religion. The unique ethnic, political, social and economic conditions of many African nations may yield new theories regarding how churches (and other organizations) operate. This dissertation helps to fill in the gap in the literature through a theory-based historical analysis of Christian churches' political activities in Kenya.

Existing analyses of church political activity in Africa focus on a different set of explanatory variables than those that have been prominent in European-focused work.

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<sup>22</sup> Chazan, Naomi, Robert Mortimer, John Ravenhill, and Donald Rothchild. 1992. *Politics and Society in Contemporary Africa*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner. Cited in: Riedl, Rachel Beatty. "Transforming Politics, Dynamic Religion: Religion's Political Impact in Contemporary Africa." *African Conflict & Peacebuilding Review* 2.2 (2012): 29-50.

<sup>23</sup> Bunting, Madeleine. "Where faith is a healer." *The Guardian* (2005); Obadare, Ebenezer Babatunde. 2007. "Religious NGOs, Civil Society and the Struggle for a Public Sphere in Nigeria" *African Identities* 5.1: 135–53.

Whereas the political economy of religion literature largely ignores the content of religious beliefs (except insofar as they influence broad church preferences such as membership maximization), scholars have viewed church political activity in Africa as determined, in part, by theological beliefs. Such attention to theological motivations echoes analyses such as that by Huntington, who explained the Catholic Church's "third wave" anti-authoritarian/pro-democracy shift as a response to the new theological guidelines issued by the Second Vatican Council, as well as the influence of liberation theology. The political economy of religion literature, while largely agnostic about the sincerity with which religious leaders hold and practice the tenets of their faith, tends to downplay the importance of ideational motivations, viewing Christian theology as containing justification for a wide variety of political behaviors and arguing that ideological shocks such as Vatican II do not adequately explain variation in churches' subsequent political behavior.<sup>24</sup>

Scholars of African church political activity often take a less skeptical view of the role of theology. The critical roles played by Christian (often Catholic or mainline Protestant) denominations in the face of authoritarian regimes have been explained by a scripture-based commitment to democracy, justice and human rights. Theology has also been used to explain the quiescence and support offered by other denominations, including certain evangelical churches and African Initiated Churches (AICs) for governments. Among studies that venture to contrast the pro-government and anti-government approaches of different denominations in the same political setting, those churches that remained uncritically supportive of governments are often labeled as

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<sup>24</sup> See for example Gill 1998: 45-46.



conservative in their theology, with more “liberal” churches daring to serve a more critical, “prophetic” role.

In addition to being theologically driven, African church leaders are also susceptible to the social and economic pressures that influence secular actors. Much of the critical analysis of church political activity and church-state relations in Africa is therefore based on taking existing frames for analyzing African politics and applying them to churches as social and political actors. Two key, related concepts relevant to analyzing church politics are clientelism and ethnic-based politics. Bratton and Van de Walle describe the system of clientelism at play in many African nations as “neopatrimonialism”, which the authors contend “is the *core* feature of politics in Africa.”<sup>25</sup>

The other much-discussed concept in African politics is ethnic favoritism and the role of ethnic ties. Many of the patronage networks of the type discussed above are organized along ethnic, regional or family lines. More generally, ethnic solidarity and intra-ethnic cooperation becomes a useful organizing principle for elites and non-elites competing with one another for scarce economic resources and political power.<sup>26</sup> Elites

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<sup>25</sup> Bratton, Michael, and Nicholas Van de Walle. *Democratic Experiments in Africa: Regime Transitions in Comparative Perspective*. Cambridge University Press, 1997: 62; emphasis in original. The authors describe neopatrimonialism as a system in which “the chief executive and his inner circle undermine the effectiveness of the nominally modern state administration by using it for systematic patronage and clientelist practices in order to maintain political order. Moreover, parallel and unofficial structures may hold more power and authority than the formal administration”.

<sup>26</sup> Bates, Robert H. "Modernization, Ethnic Competition, and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa." in Rothchild, Donald S., and Victor A. Olorunsola, eds. *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*. Westview Press, 1983: 171; Eifert, Benn, Edward Miguel, and Daniel N. Posner. "Political Competition and Ethnic Identification in Africa." *American Journal of Political Science* 54.2 (2010): 494-510.

have incentives to engage in ethnic-based political and economic competition; leaders derive benefits from the support of their ethnic groups, and these ethnic communities threaten various sanctions, including loss of prestige and social status, for elites who do not deliver goods to their co-ethnics.<sup>27</sup> Longman sees church leaders as active participants in networks of ethnic ties and political entanglements.<sup>28</sup> Despite Ross viewing churches as challenging existing systems of patronage at work in African politics, Longman notes that church leaders often sit atop such patronage networks themselves.<sup>29</sup> Bergman argues that there have been active efforts by governments to incorporate Christian churches into ethnically-based, state-centric patronage networks.<sup>30</sup>

In applying these concepts to religious organizations, scholars of African politics have also challenge some of the assumptions that have been made in the western-based literature on church political activity, such as the conception of the church as a unitary actor. Haynes, for example, does not deny the institutional motivations that church leaders have for promoting their organizations' success, but also views the leaders of denominations as self-interested individuals whose preferences may diverge from those

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<sup>27</sup> Bates 1983: 162.

<sup>28</sup> Longman, Timothy. "Church politics and the genocide in Rwanda." *Journal of Religion in Africa* (2001): 163-186.

<sup>29</sup> Ross, Kenneth R. "'Worrisome Trends': The voice of the churches in Malawi's third term debate." *African Affairs* 103.410 (2004): 91-107; Longman 2001: 174.

<sup>30</sup> Berman, Bruce J. "Ethnicity, Patronage and the African State: The Politics of Uncivil Nationalism." *African Affairs* 97.388 (1998): 334.

of church members.<sup>31</sup> For Haynes (2004), these church leaders form part of a “hegemonic” network of ruling elites connected by ethnicity, education, and socioeconomic status.<sup>32</sup> For Haynes, religious and secular elites alike have vested interests in maintaining the status quo. In addition to sharing the general interests of the secular ruling class, religious leaders often enjoy specific economic and political ties to incumbent governments. Church leaders will therefore only offer protest against sitting governments in rare circumstances, such as government actions interfering with “the ability of [religious leaders] to practise and propound their religion,” or when popular opinion has turned strongly against the government.<sup>33</sup>

### ***2.3 Churches and Politics in Kenya***

Kenya is an especially useful country for studying the politics of churches. The country has long been characterized by Christian pluralism, with various denominations existing within the country without any maintaining a majority share of the population. The largest denominations include the Catholic and Anglican churches; mainline Protestants such as Methodists and Baptists; strict sects such as Seventh-Day Adventists; Pentecostal churches such as Assemblies of God; and various African Initiated Churches. Many of these denominations have existed in Kenya since the colonial era, and have played a variety of roles in colonial and independence-era politics.

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<sup>31</sup> Haynes, Jeff. "Religion and democratization in Africa." *Democratization* 11.4 (2004): 66-89.

<sup>32</sup> Haynes 2004: 73. Haynes draws upon Antonio Gramsci for his concept of hegemony, which Haynes conceptualizes in the African context as including ideological justifications for perpetuation of the status quo, appealing to concepts such as “national unity” (Haynes 2004: 77)

<sup>33</sup> Haynes 2004: 73-74.

Much has been written about the role of the church in Kenyan politics. Several scholars have noted the close relationships that existed between the colonial Kenyan government and the two largest British mission churches, the Anglican and Presbyterian churches, as well as the activities of oppositional churches such as the Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa, which offered support to the Mau Mau rebels who opposed colonial rule.<sup>34</sup> The churches have continued to be involved in politics in independent Kenya, with scholars taking note of their political activities. Several authors, such as Chepkwony, have noted the relatively peaceful relations between the churches and the government of Jomo Kenyatta. More recently, the church has had a mixed role in politics during the Kibaki presidency, playing only a minor role in addressing the violence that followed the 2007 election, but carrying out a major political campaign opposing constitutional reform in 2010 (as detailed in Chapter 4 of this dissertation).

Most of the scholarship on church-state relations in Kenya focuses on the presidency of Kenya's second head of state, Daniel arap Moi. Some works simply cite the Christian churches as playing a large role in opposing Moi's autocratic rule and forcing democratization, comparing the role played by the Kenyan churches to similar pro-democracy church movements that operated in the 1980s and 1990s in countries such as Benin and Malawi.<sup>35</sup> Other works take a more nuanced approach, acknowledging that there was disagreement between churches and between individual church leaders, with

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<sup>34</sup> See, for example: Ngunyi, Mutahi G. "Religious Institutions and Political Liberalisation in Kenya." In Gibbon, Peter, ed. *Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya*. Nordic Africa Institute, 1995: 130-131, 150.

<sup>35</sup> Widner, Jennifer A. "Political reform in Anglophone and Francophone African countries." *Economic and political liberalization in sub-Saharan Africa* (1994): 66.

some denominations and clergy criticizing the government while others strongly supported Moi.

Examining variation in the roles of the churches in Kenyan politics, Ngunyi provides one of the best comparative analyses of African church political activities. Comparing various Christian denominations in Kenya during the Kenyatta presidency and particularly the first portion of the Moi era, Ngunyi divides religious organizations into three categories based on their political stances: a) “activist” churches that offered criticism of the Moi government; b) “loyalist” churches that supported the government and criticized other denominations for mixing religion and politics; and c) “Africanist” churches that largely remained neutral and apolitical.<sup>36</sup> In keeping with other analyses of church political activities in Africa, Ngunyi attributes much of the variation in church political stances to ethnic and patronage ties; the “activist” churches are identified as those with leaders and members of ethnic groups, namely the Kikuyu and Luo, who were incorporated into elite political circles and patronage networks by President Kenyatta, a Kikuyu, but who were subsequently excluded from political power and patronage by Moi, a member of the less prominent Kalenjin ethnic group. Ngunyi also identifies a list of other variables he argues made certain churches more likely to adopt oppositional roles:

The more an institution’s internal decision-making process followed democratic procedures, the greater its involvement in local level development, the greater its autonomy from its parent organization, and the more middle-class its leadership

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<sup>36</sup> Ngunyi (1995) labels as “activist” the Catholic, Anglican, and Presbyterian Churches; the “loyalist” churches he looks at are the Africa Inland Church (AIC), the Reformed Church of East Africa (RCEA), the Kenya Assemblies of God and the African Gospel Church; the Legio Maria church is cited as an example of an “Africanist” church the Legio Maria church.

and its flock, the higher was its likelihood to take up issues that were unpopular with the state.<sup>37</sup>

Ngunyi finds mixed results for these four additional factors. The first factor, organizational structure, based on Ngunyi's assessment of organizational democracy, correlates fairly well with the activist/loyalist divide. Similarly, Ngunyi finds that the leaders and the members of the "activist" churches tend to have higher social status, as measured by educational attainment, than the loyalist churches, confirming his hypothesis of middle-class based activism. Ngunyi finds mixed results for the other two variables. The relationship between political activism and involvement in development work is less clear; while the "activist" churches tend to engage in significant levels of development work, which Ngunyi argues reflects a greater sense of concern for the well-being of the citizenry and deeper connection to the populace and its preferences, some of the "loyalist" churches also had significant development projects. The author explains development work among churches in the loyalist group as a result of patronage from the state, though this explanation muddles the argument of whether development work should be correlated with less or greater dependence on the state. Ngunyi likewise finds mixed results for the final variable, autonomy from parent organizations. While he argues that the "activist" churches were all autonomous organizations,<sup>38</sup> he concedes that a "lack of autonomy was only a really constraining factor in some of the loyalist institutions."<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 152.

<sup>38</sup> Ngunyi (1995) argues, as do Gill and others, that the national Catholic Churches are functionally autonomous from the Vatican. My treatment of the Kenyan Catholic Church similarly adopts this position.

<sup>39</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 173.

While thoughtful in its hypotheses and rich in empirical research, Ngunyi's analysis still falls short of adequately explaining the different stances taken by the Kenyan churches. It does not explain differences in the timing and intensity of the "activist" churches' responses during the Moi era. Nor do ethnic considerations alone explain the actions taken by the churches, despite the prominence given in other works to ethnic factors as explaining Kenyan church political stances in particular and politics in Kenya and Africa more generally. Rather, Ngunyi's identification of the "internal decision-making process" of a church as a determinant of the church's political stance actually presents an important finding that calls for greater analysis.

#### ***2.4 Internal Structure of Organizations and Political Activities***

A variety of literatures have recognized the link between the internal structures of civil society organizations and these organizations' relationships with governments. This has most notably been acknowledged in the literature on corporatism, which cites one of the defining features of corporatism as the consolidation of groups such as labor unions into centralized organizations marked by hierarchical control.<sup>40</sup> Though later examples have demonstrated that corporatism may be able to exist with a variety of organizational structures for unions, the general consensus in the literature has been that corporatism required that labor be organized into "monopolistic, centralized, and internally nondemocratic groups."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Schmitter, Philippe C. "Still the century of corporatism?." *The Review of Politics* 36.01 (1974): 85-131.

<sup>41</sup> Baccaro, Lucio. "The Construction of "Democratic" Corporatism in Italy." *Politics & Society* 30.2 (2002): 328. See also: Baccaro, Lucio. "What is Alive and What is Dead in the Theory of Corporatism." *British Journal of Industrial Relations* 41.4 (2003): 683-706.

Schmitter differentiates between two varieties of corporatist arrangements: an interest group driven “societal corporatism” and a state driven “state corporatism.” In both forms for corporatism, leaders of corporatist groups are intended to work with state leaders in the formulation or implementation of policies. Societal corporatism is meant to give economic sectors, such as labor, greater bargaining power by allowing them to speak with a unified voice. In state corporatism, the structures promoted by states over interest groups are meant, *inter alia*, to exert “explicit state *control* over the leadership, demand-making and internal governance of these associations.”<sup>42</sup> State corporatism is thus a form of social control through hierarchical ordering and government control of organizations such as labor unions.<sup>43</sup> These hierarchical unions often endure the fall of the authoritarian states that created them and remain as a tool used by states for social control in mixed or “hybrid” regimes.<sup>44</sup> The two forms of corporatism correlate to the two mechanisms identified in this dissertation as relating church leadership structure to church political orientations. Just as unified economic groups can better negotiate with governments in societal corporatist arrangements, churches with unified – that is to say, singular – leadership can better negotiate with governments in order to reach mutually advantageous arrangements. Just as governments practicing state corporatism seek to

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<sup>42</sup> Collier, David, and Ruth Collier. "Who Does What, to Whom, and How: Toward a Comparative Analysis of Latin American Corporatism." in Malloy, James, ed. *Authoritarianism and Corporatism in Latin America*. University of Pittsburgh Press, 1976: 493; emphasis in original.

<sup>43</sup> Chapman, Debra D. *The Struggle for Mexico: State Corporatism and Popular Opposition*. McFarland, 2012. p27,172.

<sup>44</sup> Robertson, Graeme B. "Strikes and labor organization in hybrid regimes." *American Political Science Review* 101.4 (2007): 781.



control economic actors by hierarchically structuring organizations and coopting leaders, governments seek to influence or control churches through coopting leaders, a process that is easier when it can be accomplished through the capture of a single individual.

Internal organization is important in state interactions with groups in society outside of organized labor and business. David Downes demonstrates an extension of the corporatist model to environmental organizations in Australia, which has “necessitated the development of more hierarchical structures within the environmental organizations” to facilitate these groups’ representatives “negotiat[ing] on behalf of their organizations.”<sup>45</sup> Examining social protest movements operating under autocratic states, Guillermo Trejo “suggest[s] that targeted forms of repression or co-optation are more likely to work when social movements are structured as centralized networks dominated by a few powerful leaders rather than as decentralized and horizontal structures.”<sup>46</sup> Siegel demonstrates how such organizations are vulnerable to targeted repression of the groups’ leaders by authorities.<sup>47</sup>

Religious organizations have been no strangers to corporatist arrangements with governments. While the corporatist literature has primarily focused on the incorporation of secular organizations, corporatism has its historical roots in Catholic thought.<sup>48</sup> As a

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<sup>45</sup> Downes, David. "Neo-Corporatism and Environmental Policy." *Australian Journal of Political Science* 31.2 (1996): 187.

<sup>46</sup> Trejo, Guillermo. *Popular Movements in Autocracies: Religion, Repression, and Indigenous Collective Action in Mexico*. Cambridge University Press, 2012: 112.

<sup>47</sup> Siegel, David A. "When Does Repression Work? Collective Action in Social Networks." *Journal of Politics* 73.1 (2011): 232-47.

<sup>48</sup> Modern corporatist thinking was articulated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by Popes Leo XIII and Pius XI, respectively, as a response to socialism, as well

centralized, hierarchically ordered institution, the Catholic Church had been one of the main historical “corporations” in Europe, and similarly served a major role in corporatist arrangements in twentieth century Latin America.<sup>49</sup> The hierarchical structure of the Catholic Church has generally been compatible with corporatist arrangements, though cross-country variations in the internal organization of national-level Catholic hierarchies have influenced church-state relations.<sup>50</sup> Protestant and other non-Catholic Christian churches have a greater range of organizational variation, which Bellin suggests may be related to different preferences and thus different courses of action than those of the hierarchical, rigidly organized Catholic Church.<sup>51</sup> Non-Christian religious organizations have further organizational variation still. In a discussion of the church taxes collected by the German government on behalf of the country’s largest religious groups, Monsma and Soper note that Muslims, despite being the third-largest religious group in Germany, are not included in the system.<sup>52</sup> Explaining this exclusion, the authors attribute the

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as liberalism and the laissez-faire capitalism associated with the latter. Kickert, Walter JM. "Beneath Consensual Corporatism: Traditions of Governance in the Netherlands." *Public Administration* 81.1 (2003): 119-140. See also Williamson, Peter J. *Varieties of corporatism: a conceptual discussion*. Cambridge University Press, 1985:4.

<sup>49</sup> Wiarda, Howard J. *Democracy and its discontents: development, interdependence, and US policy in Latin America*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1995: 211.

<sup>50</sup> For example, Warner (2000) argues that the relatively decentralized nature of the Catholic Church in France, which lacked a single leader or spokesperson comparable to the Pope for the Italian Church, kept the French Catholic Church from engaging in politics in a unified or coherent manner. Warner argues that this difference in internal organization helps explain the political ambivalence of the French Church when compared to the Catholic hierarchies of other countries such as Italy.

<sup>51</sup> Bellin 2008: 326-327.

<sup>52</sup> Monsma, Stephen V., and J. Christopher Soper. *The Challenge of Pluralism: Church and State in Five Democracies*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2008.

exclusion of German Muslims to the lack of bargaining power brought about by the decentralized organization of German Muslims.

The first and no doubt most important factor that has raised challenges to integrating Muslims into the existing church-state cooperative system is the Muslims' lack of a centralized organizational structure. Both the Catholic and Evangelical churches are hierarchical in nature and thus they have centralized councils and leaders who can deal with centralized governmental bureaucratic bodies and leaders....But – with the Muslims broken up into thousands of individual mosques (which do not have a formal membership) and a host of decentralized ethnic, political, and theological subgroups – in most instances there are no unified Muslim groups with whom the authorities can work.<sup>53</sup>

On the occasions that governments have had the opportunities to exert major influences on church structures, historical examples show that states seek to impose centralized, hierarchical structures similar to the corporatist model. For example, during the rule of President Mobutu Seso Seke, the major Protestant denominations of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly connected through a loose, nonbinding association, were merged into one body with a hierarchical (and eventually unelected) leadership and binding authority over the constituent churches.<sup>54</sup>

Such state-induced changes in church structure are, however, rare. With organizations such as labor unions or environmentalist groups, internal organization is endogenous to political support. Unions wanting mutually cooperative relationships with the government can alter their leadership selection and governance structures to better interact with the government, and governments seeking to better control portions of their populations can pressure or force organizations to alter their structures in ways that facilitate state

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<sup>53</sup> Monsma and Soper 2008: 20.

<sup>54</sup> Garrard, David J. "The Protestant Church in Congo: The Mobutu Years and their Impact." *Journal of religion in Africa* 43.2 (2013): 131-166.

cooptation. Governments are generally constrained in the degree to which they can influence church structure. Fox shows that despite the fact that even liberal democracies rarely observe strict separations, democracy has been shown to be specifically associated with limitations on government involvement in religion.<sup>55</sup> Fox's analysis also shows that Christian states generally have lower amounts of government involvement in religion than non-Christian states, showing that the norm of separation of religion and state has most strongly manifested as separation of *church* and state. This result implies that governments typically refrain from interfering heavily in the internal workings of churches.

From the perspective of churches, denominations often have leadership and governance structures that are determined by church theology and history. Hinings and Foster, for example, argue for a model of church organizational structure in which the beliefs and goals of a particular church are the primary determinants of its internal organization, explicitly distinguishing churches from other, economic organizations.<sup>56</sup> Allen goes further, presenting a two-dimensional classification of church doctrines and church organizational structure, with a one-to-one mapping of the former to the latter.<sup>57</sup> Additionally, churches that are transnational in nature have structures that are dictated

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<sup>55</sup> Fox, Jonathan, et al. "Do Democracies have Separation of Religion and State?." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 40.01 (2007): 1-25.

<sup>56</sup> Hinings, C. Robin, and Bruce D. Foster. "The Organization Structure of Churches: A Preliminary Model." *Sociology* 7.1 (1973): 93-106.

<sup>57</sup> Allen, Douglas W. "Order in the Church: A Property Rights Approach." *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization* 27.1 (1995): 97-117.

from abroad, as is the case with the Catholic Church. Thus church structure tends to be difficult to change and exogenous to secular politics.

Churches nonetheless vary in the malleability of their internal structures. The structures of Catholic, Anglican and certain Protestant Churches (such as Presbyterian Church) are the results of decades or centuries of religious and historical development, and in the short and medium terms are subject to minor changes at best. Other, generally younger, denominations have more mutable structures. These include African Initiated Churches, as well as Pentecostal, Evangelical and “Mega” churches that have developed in more recent decades and often eschew denominational labels. Even in these churches, however, there are generally limits on how much the state can interfere with the internal affairs of the churches. Mao and Zech use a spatial model of church membership to argue that churches strategically adopt particular organizational structures to compete with other churches for members, but that theology constrains the range of structures that a given church can adopt.<sup>58</sup>

Since churches operate based on moral authority, legitimacy is important to these organizations, and thus leaders have incentives to not implement changes that would be viewed as illegitimate by the membership. Even in the case of the merger and changes in leadership structure that took place among the Protestant churches in the DRC, the idea to merge the churches came as much from the leadership within the Protestant umbrella organization as from the government, with the former proposing merger as a way to rid the Protestant Christian community of unhelpful denominational divisions that had been

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<sup>58</sup> Mao, Wen, and Charles Zech. "Choices of organizational structures in religious organizations: a game theoretic approach." *Journal of economic behavior & organization* 47.1 (2002): 55-70.

imposed by European missionaries.<sup>59</sup> Thus, even the more malleable denominations are often constrained in the degree to which their internal structures can be altered.

### **3 Understanding Church Political Activity: Actors, Preferences and Utility**

The main research question for this dissertation is as follows: what explains the political orientations of churches vis-à-vis incumbent national governments? Churches are defined as national-level Christian denominations. For example, the Anglican Church of Kenya is considered a “church” for this project, whereas a local Anglican congregation in Nairobi is not. National governments are equated with the head of state; i.e. Kenyan Presidents Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel arap Moi, or Mwai Kibaki. Thus, the unit of analysis is the church-government dyad, e.g. the political orientation of the Anglican Church of Kenya toward the government of Mwai Kibaki. Political orientation is a one-dimensional measure of the stance taken by the church vis-à-vis the incumbent government. This measure can fall into one of three categories, with varying levels of intensity within each category: a) supportive of the government, b) neutral/apolitical, or c) critical of the government and/or supportive of opposition parties or groups.<sup>60</sup> The political orientation of a church as a whole is equated with official statements of the churches as corporate bodies, such as “pastoral letters” issued by a church hierarchy giving the church’s official position on a set of issues, or official actions taken by the churches such as participation

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<sup>59</sup> Garrard 2013: 133-134.

<sup>60</sup> It is more straightforward to understand intensity of church support or church opposition than it is to conceive of gradations of neutrality; nevertheless, churches can be officially neutral but also betray by their words and actions a slight bias toward or against the existing government.

in political rallies. In instances where a church does not explicitly produce an official statement or course of action, the church's stance is equated with the words and actions of the church's top national leadership, such as the Archbishop(s) of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, respectively, or the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church. Equating "the church" with its national leadership is a convention common to the works of Kalyvas, Gill and Warner, among others, and it conforms to analyses of African churches as being leader driven and subject to the type of "Big Man" politics prevalent in secular institutions in Africa.<sup>61</sup>

### ***3.1 Actors and Preferences***

#### ***3.1.1 Church Leaders as Individuals: Private Preferences and Utility***

Contrary to the works of authors such as Kalyvas, Gill and Warner, this dissertation acknowledges that the church is not a unitary actor. To the extent that church leaders can be viewed as agents of their church and its governing bodies<sup>62</sup>, churches are subject to standard principal-agent problems, in which the interests of church officials are not completely congruent with those of the church as an organization. Church leaders have personal preferences separate from the preferences of the church. These include material concerns as well as immaterial ones. For simplicity, I combine the various

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<sup>61</sup> Gifford, Paul. "Some recent developments in African Christianity." *African Affairs*. 93 (1994). 520-521.

<sup>62</sup> Despite the high degree of latitude given to national church leaders, mainstream national-level denominations, including the primary case studies in this dissertation, tend to either be subordinate to a transnational organization (such as the Vatican for the Catholic Church or the Seventh-Day Adventist World Headquarters), or have governing bodies made up of clergy and sometimes lay representatives. These governing bodies include the Provincial Synod of the Anglican Church of Kenya, the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, and the Central Church Council of the Africa Inland Church.

motivations of church leaders into three categories. First, church leaders are motivated by personal income and other material benefits, which may be derived from their salaries and perks from their churches as well as gratuities provided by governments.<sup>63</sup> In addition, leaders belong to particular communities, such as ethnic or regional groups, and government policies may disproportionately favor or disfavor these groups, leading to material benefits or costs to the church leaders as members of these social groups.<sup>64</sup> Second, church leaders care about their reputation in the eyes of their colleagues (national and international), members of their respective churches, and the public more generally. Maintaining a reputation of morality and faithfulness helps a church leader gain compliance from current members and recruit new members, and a good reputation provides its own nonmaterial benefits in terms of prestige. Third, church leaders are motivated by their own moral and religious beliefs.<sup>65</sup> Though individual morality is variable and not directly observable, it stands to reason that churches tend to select those

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<sup>63</sup> Zech, for example, details how churches can use salary structure and promotion as incentives to overcome principal-agent problems between churches and their clergy. Zech, Charles. "An Agency Analysis of Church–Pastor Relations." *Managerial and Decision Economics* 22.6 (2001): 327-332.

<sup>64</sup> The benefits a church leader derives by virtue of being a member of a privileged ethnic group are likely to exceed the benefits that an average member of such a group receives, due to the leader's status as an elite within the group and possibly as a well-connected individual within the network of patronage through which such benefits are channeled. (Longman 2001).

<sup>65</sup> Zech (2001) draws from economics literature to refer to these nonmaterial benefits as "psychic income." I separate this concept into the portion that is dependent upon the perceptions of others – reputation – and the portion that is purely internal to the individual, or the individual and God – moral beliefs or conscience. See also: Thurow, Lester C. "Psychic Income: Useful or Useless?." *The American Economic Review* (1978): 142-145; Zech, Charles. "The Agency Relationship in Churches: An Empirical Analysis." *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 66.4 (2007): 727-746.



with genuine religious beliefs as leaders, and that those who truly believe will, all else being equal, make more effective leaders than those who have to espouse false beliefs.

### ***3.1.2 Churches as Organizations: Organizational Preferences and Utility***

In addition to these personal determinants of utility, church leaders have strong incentives to promote the success of the church. Leaders who truly subscribe to their churches' doctrines will generally prefer to remain faithful to church doctrine and to promote the interests of their churches, even if they may be willing to sacrifice some measure of church interests for personal benefits. Furthermore, church leaders also gain social prominence and moral authority from the success of the organizations they lead, and leaders can likewise experience a loss of social and moral standing if their church is seen as failing. In addition, church leaders have specific skills and human capital that are not easily transferable to secular jobs, and often are denomination-specific. Although some national religious leaders are able to transition to secular careers, or find promotions in denominations such as the Catholic Church that have transnational hierarchies, most national-level church leaders have reached the apex of their careers. Particularly for church leaders with long or indefinite tenures, there is an incentive to work toward the best interests of the church, meaning that church leaders' preferences incorporate the interests of the organizations they head.

As identified in previous works such as Gill, churches' preferences are generally to maximize membership and resources. In keeping with the political economy of religion literature, this dissertation accepts the organizational preferences of churches as seeking to maximize members and resources. Christians are collectively commanded to "go and make disciples of all nations," and most Christian denominations are therefore to

some extent “evangelical” in the literal sense of the term.<sup>66</sup> Large membership can also give a particular church social, economic and political clout within a given society, and leading a large church gives a leader personal social and political influence as well. Monetary and human resources are necessary for recruiting and maintaining members, supporting clergy and other church professionals, and carrying out various activities in which churches engage. Especially in the developing world, churches often provide services such as education and healthcare, both for church members and for nonmembers as well. Nowhere is such work more important than in sub-Saharan Africa, where churches have been claimed to provide half of all health and education services.<sup>67</sup> Church resources can also be diverted by church leaders to private uses, within the constraints of church and external regulations and moral considerations (including the leaders’ own moral code and the expectations others have of church leaders as honest and holy individuals).

The assumptions that churches seek to maximize members and resources is therefore reasonable for this study but requires an important refinement. The assumption that churches seek to maximize, or at least retain, membership is too simplistic. Several works in the sociology of religion focus on variations in the “strictness” of religious organizations, as some denominations have more stringent requirements for membership

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<sup>66</sup> This call to evangelization comes from Matthew 28:19.

<sup>67</sup> See Bunting 2005. Furthermore, church leaders can divert resources to personal and semi-personal uses. Personal uses include using church resources to fund and maintain a personal lifestyle beyond that which leaders could afford based on their salaries. Semi-personal uses include using resources for patronage purposes, which often directly benefit those with personal ties to the leader – family members, local community members, coethnics – and consequently results in prestige and social approbation for the leader who is delivering these goods.

that deter casual members from remaining with these strict churches. Churches or “sects” may adopt higher levels of strictness in order to fulfill preferences such as maximize member welfare.<sup>68</sup> While the literature has not reached consensus on whether or not “strictness” ultimately contributes to church growth in the medium or long runs, it is clearer that in the short run stricter churches are willing to accept lower levels of membership.<sup>69</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter 4, some Kenyan church officials have stated in interviews with the author that they were willing to take unpopular stances on principle and found it acceptable to have fewer but more committed members, who will be better educated in church doctrine, practice church tenets more faithfully and contribute more resources. I will refer to this bundle of characteristics as member “faithfulness”. Given the (short-run) tradeoff between church strictness and size, churches can be thought of as maximizing member quantity and member faithfulness, giving weights to each of these considerations that allow churches to make decisions when the goals of quantity and faithfulness conflict.<sup>70</sup> Depending on how much value each church assigns to the “faithfulness” weights, scenarios may arise in which churches

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<sup>68</sup> Barros, Pedro Pita, and Nuno Garoupa. "An Economic Theory of Church Strictness" *The Economic Journal* 112.481 (2002): 559-576.

<sup>69</sup> Iannoccone, Olson and Stark presents an argument in which strictness indirectly leads to church growth by maximize the average amount of resources donated by members, which provides a church with the means to attract more members. Iannaccone et. al. 2004.

<sup>70</sup> In another work, Gill briefly recognizes the two aspects of membership maximization when he states that “[the Catholic Church] primarily wants to maximize the number of people adhering to Catholicism, and then assure that their faith is deeply ingrained.” He does not, however, go on to discuss the potential tradeoff between these two goals. Gill, Anthony. "Politics of Regulating Religion in Mexico: The 1992 Constitutional Reforms in Historical Context, The." *J. Church & St.* 41 (1999): 764-765.

can maximize their utility by accepting a smaller total membership with higher average levels of faithfulness, or churches may instead seek to gain more members while accepting lower member faithfulness.

Governments can affect churches in their quest to maximize member quantity through a number of different policies. At an extreme, governments can promote one or more denomination to the position of official state church and make membership in such a church mandatory. Governments can also ban certain denominations, making membership in these churches illegal. In between these two extremes, governments have the power to incentivize membership in some churches through public rhetoric and endorsements, as well as by providing preferential treatment to members of a specific denomination, such as tax exemptions for church-related work. Governments can facilitate high levels of church member faithfulness by adopting policies that make it easier for church members to learn and practice church doctrines. Governments can pass laws consistent with church doctrines, such as banning practices such as polygamy or alcohol consumption. Governments can also negatively impact member faithfulness by espousing beliefs and practices that are at odds with church beliefs-a government may require work or civic participation to occur during the holy days of a particular denomination, or mandate a public education curriculum that contradicts church beliefs.

Churches have a variety of sources from which they gain cash, labor and other income. The primary source of income for many churches is donation from church members. Most churches emphasize the duty of members to give tithes (literally one-tenth of their income) or other offerings to the church, and many denominations also encourage lay members to volunteer labor for basic church operations or church-related

activities. Many churches, especially the larger and older denominations, also own various assets – land, facilities such as schools and hospitals, relics and other religious items – that the churches find valuable and protect. Conflict between church and state has often arisen when the state attempts to expropriate these assets – land in Latin America, schools in Africa – from churches that are resistant to letting them go. On the other hand, the state is often another source of funding for the church. In both developed and especially in developing countries, governments often find it valuable to abdicate some of the state’s duty of social services provision to churches and other religious organizations, and partially subsidize religious groups that provide services such as healthcare and education. This may be due to a lack of state capacity, particularly in poorer countries, or simply because religious organizations possess certain characteristics, such as close community ties and ideologically driven motivation among their staffs and volunteers, that make them especially effective at service provision. The state thus becomes another source of church resources when the former finds it valuable to partner with the church in service provision.<sup>71</sup> In addition to subsidizing social service

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<sup>71</sup> Churches also receive support from international sources. National churches that are part of larger international organizations may receive transfers from their parent bodies, and churches that are not formally international often develop “partnerships” with sister churches of similar denomination or beliefs. These transfers are generally flows of resources, including money and personnel, from churches in wealthier countries to those in poorer nations. Similarly, secular international actors interested in promoting social service provision in developing countries often channel resources to religious and other non-governmental organizations because of these same characteristics, and also because these international donors are wary of inefficient and corrupt governments mismanaging funds and find religious organizations to operate with greater integrity. This project does not make any assumptions concerning the impact of national level politics or church-state relations on international donations, so these funds are considered constants and not incorporated into the analyses here presented.

provision, governments may also subsidize strictly religious aspects of church operation, such as by donating land for church buildings or subsidizing the incomes of clergy.

Churches offer support to governments when doing so helps to maximize church utility as defined above. Governments can reward supportive churches by transferring resources to the church and/or to its leaders, and by enacting preferential policies that reduce competition from other churches and therefore increase membership. Associating with a popular government can also boost a church leader's reputation, and Church support can come at a cost, however. If the government is unpopular among church members, these members can react to their church supporting the government in several ways that decrease church utility, such as holding their church's leader in lower esteem, decreasing contributions to the church, demanding a change in church leadership, or exiting the church altogether.<sup>72</sup> Church leaders must weigh the benefits offered by governments against the costs of supporting those governments.

### ***3.2 Government Preferences and Utility***

Whether or not it is in the best interest of the church to support a given government depends in large part on what the government is willing to offer in return, and this in turn depends on the government's preferences. In this dissertation, the preferences of governments will be equated with those of the head of state. This is a reasonable simplification to make given the tradition of strong presidentialism that has

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<sup>72</sup> Put in different terms, church members can exercise "exit" or "voice" to display their displeasure with church leaders' actions. Hirschman, Albert O. *Exit, Voice, and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations, and States*. Vol. 25. Harvard University Press, 1970. While Hirschmann argues that the exit option is "very nearly" unavailable in organizations such as churches (33), but in fact works like Gill (1998) show that denomination switching is a significant reality in many social contexts.

marked African governments in general (as noted by Van de Walle), and the strength of the executive relative to other branches of government in Kenya in particular; therefore the preferences of the president and the government are assumed to be equivalent.

Governments seek to maximize the probability that they will stay in power and the net amount of government income, that is, government revenue minus government expenditures. Governments earn revenue from taxes and other sources, such as investments and aid from other governments or international sources. The main domestic expenditures include enforcing law and order, mobilizing citizens for political support, and provide social services. Governments therefore have three main demands vis-à-vis churches: pro-state or pro-government ideology, citizen mobilization, and service provision.

Governments can lower the cost of ruling by employing an ideology that fosters voluntary compliance with the state. There are three main sources of such ideology. The government may draw from its own popularity, legitimacy or prestige in order to inspire citizens to comply. There are various examples of governments leaning on secular ideologies that inspire allegiance and compliance from the population, as several Latin American states did by promoting communism or fascism-inspired nationalism.<sup>73</sup> Political liberalism served a similar function in nineteenth-century Europe.<sup>74</sup> Secondly, government can instill pro-government ideology within the population through state

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<sup>73</sup> Gill 1998: 63-64.

<sup>74</sup> Kalyvas (1996), for example, details the clashes between the Catholic Church and Liberal politicians and political parties in Western Europe.

propaganda, which is often disseminated through public education.<sup>75</sup> Third, a church leader can, through his own efforts and those of his denomination, provide ideological support for the government. Governments can attempt to influence churches to support the government by providing material incentives to a church leader, or by providing subsidies to the church. When governments can lower the cost of enforcing law and order by either drawing from existing alternate sources of ideology, or by producing ideology effectively and efficiently through public education, the additional benefits of purchasing supportive ideology from a church are less likely to be worth the costs of paying churches or their leaders, making church-state cooperation and thus church support for government less likely.<sup>76</sup>

Governments do not just require the passive obedience of citizens but also need active engagement of citizens in civic and political activities, including elections.<sup>77</sup> Even in political systems that enforce strict separation between government funds and political expenditures – and many systems do not strictly enforce such distinctions – in practice,

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<sup>75</sup> Lott discusses the importance to states of utilizing public education as a tool for indoctrination in order to explain inefficiencies in public schooling across countries. Lott, John R. "An explanation for public provision of schooling: The importance of indoctrination." *Journal of Law and Economics* (1990): 199-231.

<sup>76</sup> Support in such circumstances is “less likely” but still possible. The church utility function presented above shows that, even absent church-state cooperation, churches may still offer support for governments. For example, if the government is of the same ethnic group as church members, or if the church leader has personal political preferences for the government, maximizing church utility may entail offering support for the government even if support does not increase the amount of funds government provides for the church or for the church’s leader.

<sup>77</sup> Gandhi and Lust-Okar review the literature that seeks to explain why elections are important even for many autocratic states. Gandhi, Jennifer, and Ellen Lust-Okar. "Elections Under Authoritarianism." *Annual Review of Political Science* 12 (2009): 403-422.



mobilizing citizens for elections and other polls is an expensive endeavor for governments.<sup>78</sup> Churches can mobilize citizens by providing civic education, encouraging or compelling church members to participate, and even using church infrastructure to ensure that voters show up to their polling stations. Governments (and political parties, which are not always easy to distinguish from governments) can therefore employ churches to help mobilize citizens to vote and specifically to vote in favor of the sitting government and its preferred policies.

The final major cost to governments is provision of government services. Governments generally provide or help provide a host of services to citizens, including national security, infrastructure, healthcare, and education. Churches often provide services in the areas of health and education, and governments can employ churches as partners in these endeavors, subsidizing church efforts in healthcare and education as a less-expensive alternative to the government directly providing these services. Sometimes, however, working with churches may entail some cost to the government beyond the financial costs of subsidizing church work. Ceding control of education to churches, for example, also means giving up a measure of control over the content of education and reduces the ability of the government to use schools to instill pro-government ideology.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Research has suggested that elections are especially expensive in political systems characterized by patronage, as is the case in Kenya and many other countries. Pinto-Duschinsky, Michael. "Financing Politics: A Global View." *Journal of Democracy* 13.4 (2002): 83.

<sup>79</sup> Lott (1990) argues that the ideological usefulness of public education can lead governments to directly administer education even when doing so has higher direct costs than subsidizing private education.

#### **4 The Effects of Internal Church Organization on Church Political Orientations**

Given the preferences of churches as organizations, church leaders as individuals, and governments, I propose that the internal organization of churches will affect the ways in which these preferences are translated into interactions between church and state, which in turn significantly influences the political stances taken by churches vis-à-vis incumbent governments. In some cases, church-state relations are relatively uncontroversial. If a government is generally popular among a country's population and enjoys popularity, legitimacy and approval among a church's leaders and its members, it is likely that the church will seek good relations with the government. Cordial church-state relations in the context of a popular government will generally benefit a church leader, who will see an improvement in his own reputation by being associated with the government and may also see increases in membership and members' financial offerings. Friendly relations with the state will also generally be acceptable to church members, given the government's general levels of popularity and legitimacy. When governments are unpopular or regarded as illegitimate, or when previously well-regarded governments suffer declines in their reputations, the decision of church leaders on how to approach church-state relations become more complicated, and internal church organization can play a large role in determining how interactions with the state play out. Based on the preferences of churches as organizations, church leaders as individuals, and governments, I make the following arguments, which will be explored through the case studies of Kenyan churches over time.

***Argument 1.*** Church centralization, with leadership authority concentrated in a single individual, facilitates more cooperative church-state relations; centralized churches are therefore more likely to support governments than decentralized churches.

1a) Centralized leadership within a church facilitates negotiation by presenting a single individual who can represent the church's interests in negotiations and discussions with presidents and other top government officials (whether the church leader meets with government officials in person or through designated representatives), increasing the likelihood that the church and state will come to a mutually-beneficial arrangement. Centralized church leadership also aids church-state negotiations between church leaders and government officials by facilitating personal relationships, face-to-face negotiations, and the development of mutual trust between these individuals.

1b) Centralized leadership within churches facilitates government influence over churches by presenting a single individual that the government can target with inducements or constraints in order to gain church cooperation, increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of church efforts to influence churches and making cooperative arrangements between church and state more likely.

Centralization refers to the degree to which national-level leadership and decision-making authority – executive power – is concentrated into one entity or spread out over multiple entities, and whether or not those entities are each composed of single individuals or bodies of individuals. For example, prior to 1990, most of the Kenyan churches being closely examined in this dissertation had one official who serves as the executive of his denomination.<sup>80</sup> In 1990, the Catholic Church became decentralized

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<sup>80</sup> The Catholic Church differed slightly in that there were two administrative structures, each headed by an individual who could be considered to have executive functions. First, the Catholic Archbishop of Nairobi was the highest-ranking official in the church, served as the *de facto* spokesperson and head of the Catholic Church in Kenya, and had a degree of oversight over the other bishops in the country. Second, however, the archbishop and other Catholic bishops of the country collectively meet periodically as the Kenya Episcopal Conference, a deliberative body established in 1969 for the purpose of

when three of its dioceses were elevated by the Vatican to archdioceses, raising the number of archbishops in the country from one to four. This change corresponds with increased activism of the Kenyan Catholic Church, which transitioned during this time frame from an organization that enjoyed generally cordial if unenthusiastic relations with the Moi government to a body that took a leading role in publicly criticizing the government. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, the externally imposed decentralization of the Catholic Church incorporated into the Church's decision-making process the preferences of several church leaders and the members of their communities. This multiplication of preferences and veto players made it more difficult for the Government to negotiate with the church for church support, and the exclusionary nature of Moi's ethnic coalition meant that most church members and leaders belonged to politically excluded groups, incentivizing church leaders to take an oppositional stance.

Centralization also looks at the degree to which subordinate individuals or bodies are controlled by the national leadership or exercise autonomy in their actions and decision-making. For example, while both the Catholic and Anglican churches have similar Episcopal structures with one or more Archbishops and a number of other, regionally based bishops, the relationship between these officials differs across denomination. While Catholic suffragan bishops are formally appointed by the Pope and accountable to the Vatican, archbishops in the Catholic Church have some oversight

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deciding the Church's stance on social issues, and this body elected a President (for three year terms) from among the bishops. The president of the KEC could also be thought of as the leader of the church insofar as it addressed political and other social issues, potentially creating a situation of dual national authority figures. In practice, the same individual occupied both positions until 1976; since then, one of the country's archbishops has also served as KEC President roughly half of the time.

authority over the suffragan bishops in their geographical region. By contrast, Anglican bishops other than the Archbishop enjoy a great deal of autonomy within their dioceses, and each bishop is elected by clergy and lay representatives within his diocese.<sup>81</sup>

**Argument 2.** Alongside centralization, authoritarian church structures, featuring lack of accountability and few checks and balances for church leaders, increases the credibility with which church leaders, or their designated representatives, can promise support to governments.

Lack of accountability makes it easier for the church leader to carry out agreement by lessening the veto power that exists within the organization.<sup>82</sup> The leader himself can credibly commit to carry out the support promised to the government in exchange for benefits from government resources. A church leader can also compel subordinates to acquiesce to the terms of the deal made between the church leader and the government. From the point of view of the government, making a deal with the leader of an internally-democratic church not only raises the price that the government may have to pay for a successful deal (since the church leader has to worry about the consequences should his decision to support the government be an unpopular one among church members). Internal democracy within the church also presents the government with the

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<sup>81</sup> The Anglican Archbishop is considered a peer, a “first among equals”, presenting a mesocosm of the associative nature of the worldwide Anglican Communion. In such a structure, the Archbishop has little power to enforce any agreement made between himself and the government, as bishops in other dioceses can express their own political views with little fear of sanction from the church hierarchy.

<sup>82</sup> Putnam notes that a negotiator may have low credibility if he cannot guarantee that an agreement he makes will not be vetoed within the organization he represents. Putnam, Robert D. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-level Games." *International organization* 42.03 (1988): 439.

possibility that the church may renege on a deal with the state should church members decide to veto the arrangement or replace the church leader who negotiated the deal. Internal democracy or accountability within the church thus creates a degree of uncertainty for the state, which makes successful negotiations less likely.

Kalyvas, in an examination of democratic transition in the presence of religious political parties, makes the argument that religions characterized by “centralized, autocratic, and hierarchical organization” are better able to make credible commitments than their decentralized and democratic counterparts, due to the ability of the former religions to control and sanction individuals within the religion who attempt to violate or contradict policies enacted by the religions’ leaders.<sup>83</sup>

**Argument 3.** Along with centralization, authoritarian church structures, in which internal democracy is low and leaders face little or no checks and balances or challenges to their positions and decision-making authority, lowers the cost to governments of obtaining church support by making it easier for governments to make private deals with leaders, lowering the cost of cooptation, in exchange for support.

Lack of accountability can be thought of as increased job security. As a leader becomes more secure in his tenure, the salary and benefits the leader derives from his church approaches a constant, and is thus not influenced by the decision to support or not support the government. In contrast, when accountability is high, a church leader’s decision to support an unpopular government can place in jeopardy the leader’s position and the benefits that come with it. This presents a tradeoff between the benefits derived

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<sup>83</sup> Kalyvas, Stathis N. "Commitment problems in emerging democracies: The case of religious parties." *Comparative Politics* (2000): 388-390.

from the church and those coming from the Government, thus raising the minimum level of benefits that governments would have to pay and therefore making the church a more expensive ally for the government to maintain.

Additionally, even if leaders enjoy job security once in office, internal democracy in the initial selection of leaders will affect the types of leaders being chosen in ways that influence subsequent church political activities. Knowing that their leader cannot easily be removed from office once he is selected, church members (or their representatives) will have greater incentive to select leaders who have strongly-held personal preferences that closely match the preferences of the membership.

***Argument 4.*** Church political orientation is influenced by factors such as ethnic considerations, government popularity, church size and government demand for church provision of social services, but these are unlikely to be decisive in determining church political stances unless decentralized leadership and democratic accountability structures exist with the church.

When internal church organization presents unfavorable conditions for close church-state relations, the church may nonetheless support a government if the church and government share ethnic identities or if the government is simply popular among church members. In such cases, supporting the government is not a liability for the church's leaders, and may actually benefit them through enhanced reputation and favorable reactions from church members. When the church and government primarily represent different ethnic or regional groups, particularly if antagonism exists between these groups, ethnic considerations will likely lead to greater church opposition to government. Government unpopularity, even if not based on ethnicity, can have similar

effects, fostering church opposition.<sup>84</sup>

For situations in which governments are less interested in gaining ideological support from churches and more interested in churches' capacity to mobilize voters or carry out development work, centralization will generally be less important. When governments seek church support for voter mobilization, church size will factor into government decisions regarding which churches to target for negotiation or cooptation, since larger churches have influence over larger portions of a country's citizenry.<sup>85</sup> Governments that primarily seek to partner with churches for the purpose of development work or service provision will also be more concerned with church capacity, which will be a function of factors such as church size, geographical coverage, human capital, connections to international financial and human resources (such as missionaries, particularly those with relevant technical skills), and other such factors. Governments will seek the largest and most capable churches. The Catholic Church, for example, has estimated that it operates one quarter of all health care facilities worldwide,<sup>86</sup> and is thus an attractive partner for governments seeking to improve social service provision.

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<sup>84</sup> A further implication of Argument 4 is that even when churches are centralized and have unaccountable leadership, ethnic animosities or government unpopularity can negatively affect church-state relations, but the structure of the church will generally dampen or neutralize oppositional factors by allowing the churches to negotiate agreements with the government. Only when negotiation fails, generally due to government disinterest or inflexibility, do these other factors become decisive.

<sup>85</sup> Governments will also be concerned with churches' ethnic and geographical coverage within the country based on which populations the government seeks to target.

<sup>86</sup> "Catholic hospitals comprise one quarter of world's healthcare, council reports." *Catholic News Agency*. [http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/catholic\\_hospitals\\_represent\\_26\\_percent\\_of\\_worlds\\_health\\_facilities\\_reports\\_pontifical\\_council/](http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/catholic_hospitals_represent_26_percent_of_worlds_health_facilities_reports_pontifical_council/). Accessed October 2, 2014.



Because churches generally have incentives to enter these mutually beneficial relationships with governments in the areas of service provision and development work, they will generally be willing to do so regardless of the churches' internal structures. In these scenarios, centralization can still have an impact in two ways. First, if multiple religious organizations are competing for government cooperation, centralization can provide a particular church with a negotiation advantage over less centralized denominations and allow it to win these government "contracts" in the same manner in which the church would negotiate government support in exchange for ideological support. Second, even though government has a financial incentive to cooperate with churches in development and service work, if a church is oppositional and that opposition is having a large negative impact on the government politically, the government may withhold cooperation as a way of punishing that church or coercing it into changing its stance. And given that opposition is argued here to be a function of church decentralization and internal accountability, church structure may thereby be correlated with cooperation on social services, but to a lesser degree than the link between structure and political support.

## **5 Conclusion**

Without doing injustice to the ideological and moral factors that influence churches' engagements in politics, church-state interactions can be understood in terms of interactions between rational actors seeking to maximize their respective utilities. It is therefore necessary to identify the preferences of these actors, and this dissertation improves upon previous works by examining some of the neglected nuances in the goals

of both churches (particularly church leaders) and governments. Understanding preferences is, however, not sufficient for understanding what positions churches will take vis-à-vis governments; internal organizational features of churches influence the preference structures of churches as organizations and thus can have major impacts on the political stances that church leaders are willing and able to take on behalf of their denominations. Given the exogenous nature of internal church structure, Christian denominations offer useful cases for examining the role of structure on the political activities of civil society organizations and their relations with states. This dissertation expands upon the insights offered by various literatures concerning the impact of organizational structure on relations with the state, including Ngonyi's analysis of internal organization and the activist/loyalist divide, by exploring the logic and mechanisms by which internal church structure influences church political stances. The dissertation does this by closely examining the characteristics, structures and political activities of the national leaderships of several major Christian churches in Kenya from independence in 1963 through 2012. These churches are among the largest denominations in the country, and each has a long history in Kenya. They are:

- The Catholic Church, including the assembly of Kenya's Catholic bishops and archbishops, collectively known as the Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC)
- The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), formerly known as the Church of the Province of Kenya and hereafter referred to simply as "the Anglican Church"
- The Africa Inland Church, or AIC
- The Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), referred to here as the "Presbyterian Church"

- The Seventh-Day Adventist Church-East Africa Union, referred to as “The Seventh Day Adventist Church” or SDA<sup>87</sup>

The following chapters examine the political orientation of churches in Kenya, primarily focusing on these five denominations, as demonstrated by the statements and actions of top church leaders. Each chapter is devoted to examining the political orientation of the churches during one of the first three presidencies of post-independence Kenya. Chapter 2 focuses on the presidency of Jomo Kenyatta, 1963-1978, a period marked by general church-state cooperation, punctuated by two major instances of church opposition to government policies. This chapter argues that the generally cordial nature of church-state relations under Kenyatta is attributable to both the compatibility of preferences of the major churches and the Kenyatta government and the centralized leadership structure of the churches, which facilitated negotiation between church leaders and the President. As the internal organizational features of some of these denominations gradually shifted away from centralization, the political stances of the decentralizing churches similarly shifted moderately in the direction of mild criticism toward the government. The two instances of overt public clashes between churches and the government, meanwhile, came over issues in which negotiations broke down because church and government preferences were not immediately reconcilable.

Chapter 3 details church orientation toward President Daniel arap Moi, in office 1978-2002. During Moi’s presidency, Kenya became increasingly oppressive and authoritarian, until external and internal pressures, including opposition from several churches, forced the government to democratize in the early 1990s. During the Moi

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<sup>87</sup> Profiles of these denominations are included in Appendix 1.

years, church political orientation differed significantly across denominations. These differences align with increasing divergence in the internal structures of the major denominations; those that remained centralized and authoritarian were coopted by the government, while the churches that became less centralized escaped cooptation and became increasingly critical of the abuses of the government. Church structure serves as a better indicator of church political activities than other factors, such as ethnic identities or church conservatism/liberalism, which have been argued in other works as being decisive in church-state relations during this period.

Chapter 4 examines the presidency of Mwai Kibaki through 2010, examining the orientations of the churches vis-à-vis the government, including differences within as well as across denominations, as highlighted by three major political events: the 2005 constitutional referendum, the 2007 presidential election and subsequent post-election violence, and the 2010 constitutional referendum. Church-state relations during the Kibaki presidency tended to shift based on the government's changing "demand" for various church products, such as voter mobilization. The government's ability to find substitutes for church support, as well as political reforms that decreased the governments ability to negotiate with churches or coopt church leaders, weakened the link between church structure and church political activities. Nevertheless, when President Kibaki most needed church support, such as during the 2007 election campaign, the churches' responses to government courtship were again determined by church structure.

Chapter 5 concludes the dissertation by offering discussions of the Kenyan cases and extending the examination of church political activity by conducting a quantitative analysis of church political stances and internal structures across African nations since

independence. This quantitative analysis, as well as brief qualitative examination of some of the cases included in the larger dataset, gives “out of sample” validation to the arguments presented in the dissertation. The chapter concludes by discussing the significance of the dissertation’s findings for understanding religious organizations and civil society more generally.

## **Chapter 2: Church Political Activity Under Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978)**

### **1 Introduction**

In July 1976, Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta made an appearance at a meeting of the Association of Member Episcopal Conferences in Eastern Africa, a gathering of Catholic bishops from across East Africa including Kenya's own senior clergy. Through his Minister for Agriculture, Jeremiah Nyagah, the elderly President Kenyatta referred to the church as "the conscience of the nation" and called upon religious leaders to speak out to the government when it became necessary to do so.<sup>88</sup> Kenyatta's words, however, hardly reflected the President's desires or the churches' actions during this period; the churches mostly remained quiet throughout Kenyatta's time in office, which suited the President just fine. During his time in power, Kenyatta enacted policies that disproportionately channeled land and other resources to his own Kikuyu ethnic group, consolidated political power around a small ruling clique, and either marginalized or eliminated political rivals. The churches articulated few official criticisms of the government's excesses. On the contrary, the major denominations were mostly silent on issues of politics or governance, especially during the first few years of Kenyatta's time in power, and the few comments made by the churches were usually supportive of the government and especially of Kenyatta himself. To the extent that church leaders interacted with President Kenyatta and his government, often at harambees (fundraisers), relations were friendly and marked by expressions of mutual support and admiration. For the most part, however, the churches stayed out of public life, which seemed to align with Kenyatta's interests. Beyond public expressions of friendship, the churches and the

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<sup>88</sup> *Target* July 18, 1976.

government cooperated on a number of development projects and social services, as “the state co-opt[ed] the Church as a partner in nation-building,”<sup>89</sup>

Prior to 1970, only two incidents drew significant public opposition from churches. In 1968, the government enacted major educational reforms, assuming control of the country’s large network of mission-founded schools. This action drew public rebuke from Kenya’s Catholic hierarchy, though the Catholic Church and the state soon came to a mutual understanding acceptable to both parties. The following year, tensions between the ruling Kikuyu ethnic group and the politically marginalized Luo group led to a widespread phenomenon in which Kikuyu and members of some other ethnic groups were required to participate in traditional ceremonies in which they swore loyalty oaths that pledged to keep the state in Kikuyu hands. These ceremonies were forcibly imposed on large segments of the Kikuyu population with at least tacit approval of the government. The oathing phenomenon eventually led to condemnation and protests from several of the country’s largest Christian denominations, whose members suffered reprisals for refusing to participate in what they considered to be un-Christian rituals. After several public displays of dissatisfaction on the part of the churches, the government pledged to put an end to the oathing ceremonies, which died out soon after. In both these instances, church leaders only intervened when policies specifically impacted church interests, and still the churches did not take their criticisms public until after they had exhausted private efforts to influence the government’s actions. Furthermore, the churches were very careful to craft their criticisms in narrow terms, targeting the specific policies with which the churches took issue while pledging their

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<sup>89</sup> Chepkwony, Agnes. "The Role of Non-governmental Organizations in Development: A Study of the National Christian Council of Kenya (NCCCK), 1963-1978." (1987): 145.

general loyalty and support to President Kenyatta and his government. From 1970 on, the churches again maintained mostly positive relationships with the government. The public statements of the Catholic and Anglican churches were more measured and not as uncritically supportive than they had been in previous years, but even these two denominations maintained mostly cordial and mutually supportive relationships with the government.

What explains the generally supportive stances taken by the churches, and particularly by the churches' top leaders? The experiences of the churches under President Kenyatta informed the arguments presented in the opening chapter of this dissertation, and the current chapter illustrates and elaborates upon these arguments. As noted in Chapter 1, the church's public ideological support for government can be thought of as a commodity – one of three commodities that religious organizations specialize in producing, along with citizen mobilization and provision of social services – that governments may attempt to purchase from the churches. Like any commodity, the quantity and price at which this ideological good is sold depends on supply and demand. On the supply side, church leaders were generally eager to be associated with the government, especially during the early years of independence, as this was a source of prestige and resources for the clergy. From the demand side, however, Kenyatta had only limited use of church ideological support, as his history and reputation provided him with a great deal of personal popularity and legitimacy, and so the President only had to expend minimal amounts of effort to maintain church support. Kenyatta similarly did not need the churches to mobilize citizens, as the government's authoritarian policies toward political opposition neutralized any significant threats to Kenyatta's continued rule. In the



later years of Kenyatta's presidency, the government's failings, ethnic favoritism and use of repression and political assassinations severely damaged the public's support for Kenyatta's government. This loss of confidence did not directly threaten Kenyatta's tenure as President, but placed some of his political allies in danger of being voted out of office. While the government thus had greater need for ideological support and pro-government citizen mobilization from the churches, church leaders had gained their own legitimacy and were aware of the declines in Kenyatta's prestige among the population and among church members. Some of the churches were therefore slightly more willing to temper their support with mild criticisms.

Chapter 1 argues that understanding the preferences of churches and state is insufficient for understanding the outcome of church-state relations, as the structure of churches impacts how preferences are transformed into political activities. During Kenyatta's time in power, features of the internal organization of the churches served to mitigate the impact of lower level discontent on top-level church policies. During this time, the churches of Kenya shared centralized and relatively unaccountable leadership structures; the churches each possessed a single leader who could speak for his denomination. This structure facilitated direct contacts between church leaders and President Kenyatta or his close subordinates, and also privileged personal relationships between church leaders and high government officials. Church leaders were generally able to directly discuss and negotiate issues with President Kenyatta and his government, keeping any disagreements private and coming to mutually beneficial understandings. The lack of strong checks and balances or accountability measures within the churches meant that church leaders could credibly pledge to enforce whatever agreements they

made with the government without either government officials or church leaders having to worry that the rank and file of the churches could veto the deal or significantly sanction their leaders.

Changes in the internal structures of the Catholic and Anglican churches resulted in a slightly more critical stance toward the government. The full impact of these changes would not manifest until the Presidency of Daniel arap Moi (discussed in Chapter 3), and thus the Catholic and Anglican stances toward President Kenyatta did not deviate far from those of the other denominations, even as discontent developed within the churches. In addition to the influences of church structure on church-state relations, the demand and supply for the churches' third "product", social services, remained consistent, as church and state found it mutually beneficial for the latter to subsidize the efforts of the former in providing education, healthcare and other services. These factors guaranteed that the churches were on the whole supportive of the government even in the later years of Kenyatta's rule.

The two instances of church-state conflict, over education reform in 1968 and oath-taking in 1969, demonstrate the limits of structure and shared interests in maintaining church-state cooperation. These public clashes arose because the government had particularly strong preferences regarding education and oath-taking, leading to government policies that unintentionally imposed especially high costs on the churches. Even with these two issues, public disagreements came only after failed efforts by the church to negotiate privately, and church leaders were careful to state their objections in very narrow terms that absolved President Kenyatta of personal responsibility and pledged continued church support for the President and his government.

The rest of this chapter elaborates upon the arguments presented above. Section 2 gives an overview of the major events and issues of the first years of Jomo Kenyatta's presidency, 1963-1968, and the churches' relationship to the government during this period. The churches were silent on almost all political issues, while keeping friendly ties with the government through harambees and development work. Examining the general orientation of churches, this section demonstrates how the churches' similar structures influenced them to hold back any criticisms and keep critiques private. This section also addresses alternative explanations of church political activity that have been identified in the literature and finds them inadequate, such as ethnicity. Sections 3 and 4 examine the two main instances of church-state conflict of the Kenyatta era, concerning education reform in 1968 and forced Kikuyu loyalty oaths in 1969, respectively. These sections details how divergent preferences of church and government hampered church efforts at negotiation and caused conflict despite church structures that were otherwise conducive to cooperation. Section 5 examines the relationships between the churches and the government as they relate to the events of the latter years of the Kenyatta presidency, 1970-1978. During this time, there was a slight divergence in the political orientations of the churches, as the Catholic and Anglican churches became slightly more critical of the government. Though mild, this new criticism can be traced to the indigenization of leadership within these churches and the decentralization of leadership within the two denominations. Section 6 concludes by summarizing the main insights of the chapter.

## 2 Church and State in Kenya, 1963-1968

### 2.1 Churches In Kenya at Independence

Christianity has long been the largest religion in Kenya. According to the database produced by Operation World, Christians made up approximately 42% of the Kenyan population around independence, numbering over four million of the over 9.5 million citizens of the country.<sup>90</sup> Table 2.1 details the sizes of the various denominations

<b>Table 2.1: Church Size, 1965-1975</b>				
Church Name	1965		1975	
	Adherents	% of Total Population	Adherents	% of Total Population
Catholic	1332000	13.7%	2486000	18.1%
Anglican	350000	3.6%	728000	5.3%
Africa Inland	180000	1.8%	650000	4.7%
Presbyterian	56975	0.6%	140000	1.0%
Seventh-Day Adventist	81264	0.8%	138994	1.0%

in 1965 and 1975. Of the various Christian churches, the Catholic Church has consistently been the largest denomination in Kenya; its adherents numbered over 13% of the population in 1965. Founded by various Catholic missionary societies operating throughout the territory of what would become Kenya, the Catholic Church was one of the few churches that had a national scope at independence. Though smaller and initially

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<sup>90</sup> Johnstone, Patrick, Robyn Johnstone, and Jason Mandryk. *Operation World. 21st Century Edition*. Carlisle. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster, 2001. 1965 figures. Unless otherwise noted, I use Operation World's measures for "adherents", rather than members. The former is a broader category of church followers that includes those who attend and participate in church activities but may not fulfill the official membership requirements of their denominations. The number of adherents is thus larger than the number of members, but is used because it gives a fuller understanding of the scope of the churches' size and influence.

containing a Kikuyu majority, the Anglican Church shares the national presence of the Catholic Church in Kenya.<sup>91</sup> The other three denominations covered in this dissertation are smaller in size and narrower in their ethnic and regional character.<sup>92</sup> The Presbyterian Church, Kenyatta's childhood denomination, is concentrated among the Kikuyu and related Embu and Meru ethnic groups (collectively known as the GEMA community) in Nairobi and Central Province. The Africa Inland Church, though initially having a sizable Kikuyu minority, is mostly populated by the Kalenjin and Kamba communities of Rift Valley and Eastern Province, respectively, and has generally associated with these two ethnic groups.<sup>93</sup> The Seventh-Day Adventists are concentrated in Nyanza Province in the west of the country, and its membership is evenly split between the Luo and Gusii ethnic groups. Table 2.2 shows the distribution of the major ethnic groups among the memberships of these churches. Together, adherents of these five denominations accounted for almost half of the Christians in Kenya and over 20% of the overall Kenyan population. These churches therefore represented important religious constituencies, in addition to the influence they held within their respective ethnic and regional communities.

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<sup>91</sup> Barrett, David B. *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, AD 1900-2000*. Oxford University Press, USA, 1982. The Anglican presence was in fact multinational, as the Anglican churches of Kenya and Tanzania were administered together as a single church, the Church of the Province of East Africa, until the two national churches were separated out in 1970. The Archbishop over East Africa (1960-1970), Leonard Beecher (1960-1970), was a missionary from London who had long served in the Kenyan branch of the church before becoming Archbishop, and retired in Nairobi as a Kenyan citizen. See interview with Beecher in *Target*, August 1970.

<sup>92</sup> Ethnic composition of churches drawn from Barrett (1982).

<sup>93</sup> Barrett 1982.

<b>Table 2.2: Ethnic Composition of Churches</b>						
Church Name	Ethnic Group					
	GEMA <sup>1</sup>	Luo	Luhya	Kamba	Kalenjin <sup>2</sup>	Gusii
Catholic	38.5%	18.9%	14.9%	7.6%	5.1%	6.8%
Anglican <sup>2</sup>	68.6%	8.0%	7.9%	0.0%	1.1%	0.1%
Africa Inland	20.0%	2.0%	0.0%	33.0%	27.0%	0.0%
Presbyterian	90.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%
Seventh-Day Adventist	5.0%	45.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	45.0%

<sup>1</sup>GEMA includes Gikuyu (Kikuyu), Embu and Meru Groups

<sup>2</sup> Kalenjin is the sum of figures for the Kalenjin group as well as figures for Kalenjin subgroups, including the Elgeyo, Marakwet, Pokot, Nandi and Kipsigis.

<sup>3</sup> Ethnic data not available for Nairobi diocese of Anglican Church, which represents about 6% of all Anglicans in 1970. Therefore, all percentages for the Anglican Church are lower-bound estimates.

## 2.2 Major Events and Church-State Relations, 1963-1968

Kenya became independent on December 12, 1963, with Jomo Kenyatta as its founding leader<sup>94</sup>. Kenyatta, a member of the Kikuyu ethnic group, had emerged as the leading figure in Kenya's struggle for independence from Great Britain as the head of the Kenya African National Union (KANU), the main Kenyan political group leading up to independence. Kenyatta was detained by the colonial authorities for eight years based on disputed charges that he was a leader within Mau Mau, a Kikuyu-led uprising that carried

<sup>94</sup> Independent Kenya initially operated under a parliamentary government, with Jomo Kenyatta as the country's founding Prime Minister. One year after independence, Kenya became a republic, and Kenyatta was converted from Prime Minister to President.

out a violent rebellion against the colonial system that lasted from 1952-1960. The Mau Mau had, among other characteristics, been viewed as anti-Christian, as fighters were compelled to take traditional, “pagan” Kikuyu loyalty oaths and generally rejected the mission churches as agents of colonialism. Those denominations closest to the colonial government, the Anglican and Presbyterian churches, actively participated in the government repression of Mau Mau.<sup>95</sup> The mission churches’ European leaders were wary of Kenyatta due to his alleged ties to Mau Mau, but the churches’ growing African leadership was more open to Kenyatta, sending a delegation to visit him during his detention.<sup>96</sup> Released due to massive pressure on the colonial authorities from Kenyans, including a favorable report from the African church leaders who had visited him, Kenyatta negotiated Kenya’s independence, emerging as prime minister in a KANU-led government. At Uhuru (“Independence”) Day celebration on December 12, 1963, clergy from the Catholic and Anglican churches appeared on stage with Kenyatta to represent Kenyan Christians in the celebration of the new nation.<sup>97</sup>

Kenyatta quickly consolidated power within the young state. Within a year of independence, the constitution was amended to transform Kenya from a British-styled

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<sup>95</sup> Meanwhile, the Catholic Church remained neutral to the conflict, while some indigenous Christian churches such as the predominantly-Kikuyu Africa Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) collaborated with the insurgency. Ngunyi, Mutahi G. "Religious Institutions and Political Liberalisation in Kenya." Gibbon P.(ed) (1995): 130-132, 150.

<sup>96</sup> Chepkwony 1987: 86. The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) account of this meeting records the six leaders as Obadiah Kariuki (Anglican), Rev. Andrew Wambari (AIM), Rev. John Mpaayei (AIM), Brigadier Jonathan Munyi (Salvation Army), Rev. Charles Kareri (PCEA) and John Gatu (PCEA).

<sup>97</sup> Baur, John, and Hans Burgman. *The Catholic Church in Kenya: A Centenary History*. St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1990.

parliamentary democracy to a presidential system, with Kenyatta the country's first president.<sup>98</sup> A number of other amendments concentrated power in the central government, the ruling party and/or the office of President.<sup>99</sup> KANU's main political rival in the final years of colonialism, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), was soon absorbed into the ruling party.<sup>100</sup> Kenyatta's first vice-president, Oginga Odinga, led a defection from KANU to form the opposition Kenya People's Union (KPU), but the new party only lasted three years before it was banned and Odinga arrested in 1969, ahead of the first post-independence general elections, which were held in December of that year.<sup>101</sup> The churches were mostly quiet on these events. An exception to this silence came in April 1968 when, in the midst of the government's fight with the KPU, the head of the Anglican Church in Kenya, Archbishop Leonard Beecher, publicly extolled the government. The Archbishop published an open letter to Kenyatta praising his government and noting: 'Although we are in practice a one party state, there is no dictatorship or fascism in this country...Kenyatta's rule and government has built-in mechanisms for self control and criticism.'<sup>102</sup>

In addition to political opposition, Kenyatta faced several security threats during his presidency, and the government's use of force against these threats proceeded without

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<sup>98</sup> Hornsby, Charles. *Kenya: A History Since Independence*. IB Tauris, 2013: 106.

<sup>99</sup> For a summary of the thirteen constitutional amendments passed during the Kenyatta presidency, see Ochieng', William. "Structural & Political Changes" in B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng', eds, *Development & Independence in Kenya*: 107-8.

<sup>100</sup> Hornsby 2013: 95-96.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid, 214-217.

<sup>102</sup> Sabar, Galia. *Church, State, and Society in Kenya: From Mediation to Opposition, 1963-1993*. Psychology Press, 2002: 78-79.



comment from the church community. Disgruntled former Mau Mau fighters grew increasingly dissatisfied as the government refused to reward their roles in the fight for independence with landholdings. These former fighters threatened to return to the forest; several were subsequently killed by security forces.<sup>103</sup> In the economically marginalized and underdeveloped North East Province, members of the ethnic Somali population took up arms in a low-scale war of secession, supported by the Somali government across the border, from 1964-1967.<sup>104</sup> Kenyatta also put down threats from Kenya's military, including a coup attempt in 1964.<sup>105</sup> The churches were silent concerning the government's conduct in suppressing these various threats.

After transforming Kenya into a de facto one party state, Kenyatta and his inner circle further concentrated power. Administrative power was wielded by officials such as district commissioners and provincial commissioners who were directly answerable to the office of the president. Politically, Kenyatta surrounded himself with Kikuyu from his home district of Kiambu in Central Kenya.<sup>106</sup> Kenyatta and his Kiambu clique sought to prevent rivals from emerging within the KANU government. Asian lawyer and politician Pio Gama Pinto, a communist and close ally of Odinga, was assassinated in 1965, the

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<sup>103</sup> Hornsby 2013: 115.

<sup>104</sup> The government waged a war against these Shifta ("bandits:") until 1967, when the Kenyan and Somali governments came to an agreement that dried up Somalia's support for the shifta and effectively ended the insurgency. Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011*. Yale University Press, 2011: 34.

<sup>105</sup> Branch 2011: 37.

<sup>106</sup> Prominent members of the so-called "Kiambu Mafia" surrounding Kenyatta were Mbiu Koinange, James Gichuru, Njoroge Mungai and Charles Njonjo. See Ochieng', William. "Structural & Political Changes" in B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng', eds, *Development & Independence in Kenya* (102).

first of several prominent political figures who would suffer suspicious deaths during Kenyatta's time in power.<sup>107</sup>

During the first half of Kenyatta's presidency, the country experienced significant economic growth. Kenyatta paid lip service to "African Socialism", as KANU's economic policies were ironically named when the government published its economic vision as "Sessional Paper No. 10" in 1965. In practice, Kenyatta adopted capitalist, pro-western policies and was virulently opposed to policies that approached anything close to what was commonly understood as socialism.<sup>108</sup> The clear distinction between African Socialism and Marxism noted in Sessional Paper No. 10 partially explain why the Kenyan Catholic hierarchy embraced the document, with Archbishop McCarthy declaring on behalf of the Catholic Church that "we recommend that our people embrace and propagate it in every area of our country, for it will indeed be the cornerstone of developing a free and united Kenya nation."<sup>109</sup>

While Kenyatta's economic policy was socialist in name only, those favoring actual redistribution, including Odinga, were labeled communists and harassed. Instead of expropriating large landholdings to satisfy poor landless Kenyans, Kenyatta carried out an orderly transition of ownership in the so-called White Highlands, buying out European settlers and overseeing the resettlement of land left by those settlers who exited the country. The Kenyatta government granted many of these lands to fellow Kikuyu,

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<sup>107</sup> Hornsby 2013: 144-148.

<sup>108</sup> The KPU would criticize Kenyatta's African Socialism as "neither African nor socialism." Hornsby 2013: 162.

<sup>109</sup> *African Ecclesiastical Review* Vol 7, No 3. July 1965: 271.

creating enduring tensions with groups such as the Kalenjin who have ancestral claims to the land. Virtually all of the settler lands were indigenized during Kenyatta's presidency, and government policies facilitated the transfer of most of the country's economic activity, rural and urban, into Kenyan hands.<sup>110</sup> At the same time, Kenyatta was sure not to alienate foreign involvement in the economy. "Between 1964 and 1970, large-scale foreign investment in commerce and industry almost doubled in Kenya."<sup>111</sup> Kenyatta's policies, though fostering overall growth, concentrated much of the economic gains in a small, largely Kikuyu, elite, excluding other ethnic groups as well as many ordinary Kikuyus who were not well-off or politically connected enough to take advantage of Kenyatta's land policies.<sup>112</sup> In addition, widespread corruption further concentrated economic gains into the hands of those closest to the President. The churches did little to publicly challenge these policies. Indeed, many of the large denominations benefited from the land policies, becoming major landholders in their own rights<sup>113</sup>

The Kenyatta government abolished many primary school fees and greatly expanding primary school enrollment, though its pledge of free primary education was never fully achieved for all Kenyan children. The government also devoted significant resources to greatly expand secondary education in Kenya, and this effort was supplemented by a wave of harambee secondary schools funded by parents, churches and

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<sup>110</sup> Hornsby 2013: 194-195.

<sup>111</sup> Ochieng', William. "Structural & Political Changes" in B.A. Ogot and W.R. Ochieng', eds, *Decolonization & Independence in Kenya*: 85.

<sup>112</sup> See "Country Study: Kenya". *Library of Congress- Federal Research Division*. 2007. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/Kenya.pdf>. Accessed September 10, 2014.

<sup>113</sup> See, for example, the role of the Anglican church as landlord, Sabar 2002: 128-9.

other forms of civil society.<sup>114</sup> The government also expanded the number of health facilities and medical personnel in the country. Despite overall improvements in education and health services, significant regional disparities in these services remained unchanged through Kenyatta's presidency, as resources were channeled into Kikuyu areas at disproportionately high amounts while other areas such as North East Province remained underserved and underdeveloped.<sup>115</sup> Here the churches generally provided active support for the government, less by their rhetoric and more by their role as service providers, picking up some of the slack left by the government and therefore lessening the pressure on the government to actually provide these services. Only when the government made moves to nationalize the education system, assuming control over the vast networks of church-founded schools throughout the country, was there significant public criticism from church leadership, and then only from the Catholic Church, which eventually came to terms with the government.

### **2.3 Explaining Church Political Orientation Under President Kenyatta, 1963-1968**

The general attitude of the churches, and particularly of the national church leaderships, during these initial years was cordiality with the Kenyatta government and general disengagement from politics otherwise. Despite the prominent role that ethnicity played in Kenyan politics during this era and would continue to play after, ethnic

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<sup>114</sup> Some school fees still existed, particularly for higher levels of primary education. Furthermore, local school bodies implemented their own fees to replace the lost revenue from the discontinued government fees. See Sivasubramaniam, Malini and Mundy, Karen, "Kenya: Civil Society Participation and the Governance of Educational Systems in the Context of Sector-Wide Approaches to Basic Education" Draft. February 2006.

<sup>115</sup> Hornsby 2013: 140.

considerations were not as much of a driving point in church-state relations, contrary to what other studies have argued. Structure trumped ethnicity in determining church attitudes toward the government. The Presbyterian Church, Kenyatta's boyhood church and overwhelmingly populated by the President's co-ethnics, was not significantly more supportive of the government than other denominations with less favorable ethnic compositions (see Table 2.2 above). Church structure, particularly leadership centralization and top-level autonomy from checks and balances, nullified the ethnic differences of the churches, as held by Argument 1 of the opening chapter of this dissertation. Ethnic considerations only came into play when combined with internal democracy, internal checks and balances, or inclusive decision-making rules, as characterized the Anglican and Catholic churches (Argument 4). These variations in internal structure were slight, as were the deviations in political positions that these structures facilitated; as will be discussed in Chapter 3, both would become more pronounced in the years after Kenyatta's death. The following subsections examine in detail the

### ***2.3.1 Preferences and Outcomes: Government Perspective***

Despite the churches' numerical prominence, they initially had little to offer to Kenyatta in terms of political support. Though a Presbyterian by upbringing, the president did not strongly identify as Christian, rarely attended church services outside of special appearances as a guest of honor, and practiced polygamy, which was anathema to the mainstream denominations.<sup>116</sup> More importantly for church-state relations, Kenyatta had alternative sources of ideology and popularity upon which he could draw, especially

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<sup>116</sup> Hornsby 2013: 202, 309.

in the early years of independence. To the young nation as a whole, he was *Mzee* (a Swahili honorific for an respected elder), the country's founding father and a living symbol of its successful struggle against foreign rule. Furthermore, he was presiding over a period of relative political harmony and strong, if uneven, economic growth. Among his (Kiambu) Kikuyu base, he was a benefactor, personally sitting atop various patronage networks which channeled resources to the Kikuyu in Central Province and facilitated their purchases of valuable lands in the Rift Valley and elsewhere. And to the western international community, his image had been rehabilitated by the smooth transfer of power from the British and the moderation of the new government's policies, which presented Kenya as a stable country that would resist communist influence. Drawing upon his reputation and early accomplishments, Kenyatta enjoyed the legitimacy and popularity that inspired voluntary compliance among the population. The government's slogan of Harambee! – Swahili for “let's pull together” – characterized the popular mood in these early years. With this reputation and level of social clout, Kenyatta had little demand for legitimation or citizen mobilization from the churches, and only expended minimal resources and effort to maintain friendly relations with them.

The widespread practice of harambees exemplified the dynamics of relations between Kenyatta and the churches. Like other private actors within Kenyan society, churches would hold harambees in order to raise funds for particular projects, such as a new hospital or church building at a particular location. Important church officials would preside over these events, and influential government officials would sometimes attend as guests of honor. Kenyatta and top government officials appeared at harambee fundraisers and other significant events for a number of denominations, including the Catholic,

Anglican, Presbyterian and AIC churches.<sup>117</sup> At these events, the featured guests would speak at the event and donate a token sum on behalf of the government, but their financial contribution was usually minor; the real value of an appearance by a cabinet minister or presidential advisor was that their presence drew in other important and wealthy individuals who would attend the harambees and publicly contribute in hopes of fostering connections with the government. This scenario typified the relationship between a popular government and a church; the government official would lend his presence and provide only a small sum of money in exchange for church support, and the church leaders present would gain both the prestige from the government association and income, most of the latter coming not from the government but from private citizens motivated by the government official's appearance to donate.

### ***2.3.2 Preferences and Outcomes: Church (Leader) Perspective***

While the government had little need for ideological support from the churches, these churches, and particularly their leaders, had strong incentives to associate with Kenyatta. Table 2.3 lists the national leaders of the five denominations throughout Kenyatta's presidency and their ethnic identities. At independence, most of these denominations were led by expatriates. The Catholic Archbishop of Nairobi, J.J. McCarthy, came from Ireland. Anglican Archbishop of Nairobi Leonard Beecher was

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<sup>117</sup> To give a few examples that were reported in the *Daily Nation* and *Target* newspapers: James Gichuru, Minister for Finance, addressed the opening session of the Presbyterian General Assembly (*Daily Nation*, February 17, 1964); Vice President Moi made an appearance and donation at the opening of an Anglican Boys Center (*Target*, June 1968) and was guest of honor at a construction ceremony for an Africa Inland Church building (*Daily Nation*, October 6, 1969; Kenyan First Lady "Mama" Ngina Kenyatta was guest of honor at the consecration of a Catholic bishop (*Target*, December 1970).

British, and the President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church was a Norwegian. With independence and the concomitant push for Africanization of Kenyan institutions, having the churches led by white clergy was incongruous with the spirit of the times.

The Anglican Church under Archbishop Beecher was particularly vulnerable to criticism, having played a mixed role during colonialism. On one hand, Beecher had emerged during the colonial era as an “unofficial spokesm[a]n for African interests in the predominantly white Legislative Council” of the Kenya colony after unsuccessfully advocating for African representation on the Council.<sup>118</sup> On the other hand, his participation in the Council made him an active part of the colonial structure, and his church was particularly close to the colonial government.<sup>119</sup> Beecher had also chaired a

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<sup>118</sup> Sabar 2002: 39.

<sup>119</sup> Hastings, Adrian. *A History of African Christianity 1950-1975*. Vol. 26. CUP Archive, 1979. This closeness was symbolized by the location of the residence of the Bishop of Mombasa (who at the time governed the Anglican church throughout Kenya) just outside the colonial governor’s residence. (20)



<b>Table 2.3: Church Leaders During Kenyatta Presidency</b>				
Church Name	Highest National Church Office	Officeholder	Term	Ethnic Group/ Nationality
Catholic	Archbishop of Nairobi	John Joseph McCarthy	1946-1971	Irish
		Maurice Michael Otunga	1971-1997	Luhya
Anglican	Archbishop of Nairobi	Leonard James Beecher	1960-1970	British
		Festo Olang	1970-1980	Luhya
Presbyterian	Moderator	Charles Muhoro Kareri	1961-1967	GEMA
		Crispus Gitu Kiongo	1967-1973	GEMA
		Jeremiah Kiongo Gitau	1973-1979	GEMA
Africa Inland	President/Bishop	Andrew Wambari Gichuha	1961-1971	GEMA
		Wellington Mulwa	1971-1979	Kamba
Seventh-Day Adventist	President/Bishop	M.E. Lind	1960-1965	Norwegian
		F.G. Reid	1966-1970	American
		C.D. (Coleridge Dunbar) Henri	1970-1973	American
		D.K. Bazarra	1973-1985	Ugandan
*Catholic (Episcopal Conference)	President of Episcopal Conference	John Joseph McCarthy	1969-1970	Irish
		Maurice Michael Otunga	1970-1976	Luhya
		John Njenga	1976-1982	GEMA

commission tasked with reforming education in colonial Kenya. The resulting “Beecher Report” was controversial, advocating for increased schooling for Africans while still limiting their opportunities to advance beyond primary education. Beecher’s mixed record thus left him in a vulnerable position come independence.

The Presbyterian Church had also been very close to the colonial government, though it Africanized its top leadership prior to independence by electing Charles Kareri as its first black moderator, a position he would hold for two terms (1961-1967). The Africa Inland Church similarly entered independence with a black leader, President Andrew Wambari Gichuha (1961-1971), but the church itself was not fully independent from its parent organization, the American-run Africa Inland Mission, until 1971. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, though mainly apolitical during both colonialism and Kenyatta's presidency, was at independence heavily expatriate-led in its administration. Thus, all the denominations under study had leaders or histories that conflicted with the nationalist sentiments prevalent in the new nation, and thus had reasons to benefit from close ties to the President.

Chapter 1 detailed various benefits that the government can offer to the church in exchange for church support, namely using government resources to provide material benefits to the church leader and/or provide subsidies to church activities. However, a popular government – and Kenyatta was very popular, at least initially – need not provide much in the way of material benefits in order to secure church allegiance. The government could instead supply the churches, and especially the church leaders, with legitimacy and enhanced reputation. Merely being associated with a popular political figure benefits church leaders and churches as organizations: publicly supporting Kenyatta was a means by which a church leader could improve his own reputation among the population, inspire more citizens to join the church, and inspire church members to donate more.

The government also has the power to negatively impact the churches and their

leaders. Had Kenyatta chosen to vilify the churches as colonial institutions or church leaders as illegitimate, such negative rhetoric would have likely hurt church leaders' reputations, which could have inspired citizens to opt out of church membership or withhold donations. The government could also have withheld its own subsidies, and even actively cut into the incomes of churches and their leaders through taxes, regulations, or direct expropriation of property. The government also had the power to restrict church activities through regulations, such as denying denominations registration and thus rendering their operations illegal. Such a move would make it more costly for a church to operate, as it must do so in secret in order to avoid the authorities, and the extra hassles and threat of police action is enough to discourage members from remaining with a church.<sup>120</sup>

By instead promoting a friendly and reconciliatory tone with the various churches, Kenyatta therefore benefited the personal welfare of church leaders and the organizational goals of the denominations they led. This gave the churches incentive to support the President. The Catholic Church acknowledged the benefits of Kenyatta's actions in the Church's official published history, noting that President Kenyatta chose reconciliation over holding grudges against the Church, despite the latter still being a missionary-led institution at independence.<sup>121</sup> Kenyatta chose a conciliatory approach

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<sup>120</sup> Banning an uncooperative church was not a theoretical or idle threat. For example, the Legio Maria Church, a predominantly-Luo breakaway sect of the Catholic Church in western Kenya, was initially banned before satisfying government officials that the group was not political in nature (*Daily Nation*, June 20, 1964 and June 25, 1964). Years later, Kenyatta would remind a delegation from the Legio Maria sect that churches that sought to interrupt "the smooth running of the Government machinery will be banned forthwith." (*Target*, November 23, 1973).

<sup>121</sup> Baur 1990: 221-2.

with the Anglican Church and Archbishop Beecher as well. Shortly before leading Kenya into independence, the future President sent the Archbishop a letter acknowledging the latter's role in bringing about independence and asking the Church to work toward nation-building.<sup>122</sup> Beecher, in turn, called on Anglicans in Kenya to serve the new country.<sup>123</sup>

The government also affirmed Kenyatta's childhood denomination, the Presbyterian Church. As recounted in the *Daily Nation* newspaper, Kenyatta in 1964 sent his close aide James Gichuru (then Minister for Finance) to address the first Presbyterian Church's first General Assembly since independence, promising religious freedom.<sup>124</sup> Moderator Charles Kareri, an old associate of Kenyatta, pledged the Church's loyalty and service to Kenyatta and the new state. Reverend Kareri also warned that "that there will be times when the Church will be called to speak out against social injustices, if there are any, but always in a constructive manner."<sup>125</sup> In practice, this latter promise would rarely be carried out publicly, if at all. Though the Africa Inland Church, initially still a part of the Africa Inland Mission, was not particularly close to President Kenyatta, it did count as one of its members Daniel arap Moi, who served as Vice-President from 1967 until Kenyatta's death in 1978. At least as early as 1967, Moi was attending public events for

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<sup>122</sup> Sabar 1995: 66-67

<sup>123</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 5, 1964.

<sup>124</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 20, 1964.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*

the church and its associated mission.<sup>126</sup> While the AIC was not as vocal as some of the other denominations under study, the statements it did make tended to be innocuous or supportive of the government.

As will be evident throughout this dissertation, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is a special case. The SDA Church, similar to the Catholic Church, has a uniform set of SDA-specific rules and doctrines that members worldwide are meant to follow. Many of these regulations are derived from the teachings of Adventist founder and prophet Ellen G. White.<sup>127</sup> SDA doctrine calls on church members to separate themselves from political matters, while remaining “loyal citizens” as long as doing so does not violate other church tenets.<sup>128</sup> This separation limits Adventists engagement in political activities.<sup>129</sup> Given the reputational benefits that a church leader would enjoy by associating with a popular government, which could have indirect benefits for the church in terms of increased membership and member donations, there are only have two main

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<sup>126</sup> *Daily Nation*. December 4, 1967.

<sup>127</sup> For example, Seventh-Day Adventists strictly adhere honoring the Sabbath each Saturday, which sometimes excludes them from jobs and other forms of civic engagement.

<sup>128</sup> Even though we must stand apart from all political and social strife, we should always, quietly and firmly, maintain an uncompromising stand for justice and right in civic affairs, along with strict adherence to our religious convictions. It is our sacred responsibility to be loyal citizens of the governments to which we belong, rendering “unto Caesar the things which are Caesar’s; and unto God the things that are God’s” (Matt. 22:21). *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Revised 2005. 17th Edition. Secretariat General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist: 173.

<sup>129</sup> The practical implication of these limitations on Adventists’ political activities varies based on the demands of governments. Governments seeking passive acquiescence from religious bodies generally find the Adventists very agreeable, while governments looking for more active civic or political engagement can interpret the Adventist disengagement as defiance.

reasons why a church leader would not offer support to a popular government: either because doing so violated his personal sense of holiness or ethnics or he believed that doing so would somehow lower the overall faithfulness of members. The SDA doctrine against political involvement satisfies the former condition by creating a moral impediment to close relations between the SDA leadership and the government.<sup>130</sup>

Even if offering support for government is a violation of a leaders personal sense of holiness, this will only result in the leader withholding support if the weight he attaches to personal holiness is sufficiently large relative to the magnitudes of the positive benefits derived from offering support. A long-held distinction has been drawn within the sociology of religion literature between two types of religious organizations, generally referred to as “sects” and “churches.” Sects are generally thought of as younger or less mainstream religious groups that differentiate themselves from more established churches in a number of ways, including greater emphasis on proper personal behavior among members and separation from secular social and political life.<sup>131</sup> The level of demands

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<sup>130</sup> Close ties between SDA leaders and government officials may have also set a bad example and encouraged SDA members to become more involved with political matters, which would represent a decreased level of faithfulness for church members and thus satisfy the other condition by which church leaders refused to associate with a popular government.

<sup>131</sup> Johnson (1963) summarizes the distinction as follows: “The sect, interpreting the teachings of Jesus in a literal and radical manner, is a small, voluntary fellowship of converts who seek to realize the divine law in their own behavior. It is a community apart from and in opposition to the world around it. It emphasizes the eschatological features of Christian doctrine, espouses ideals of frugality and poverty, prohibits participation in legal or political affairs, and shuns any exercise of dominion over others. Religious equality of believers is stressed and a sharp distinction between clergy and laity is not drawn. It appeals principally to the lower classes. The church, on the other hand, stresses the redemptive and forgiving aspects of Christian tradition. It compromises the more radical teachings of Jesus and accepts many features of the secular world as at least relatively good. It seeks to dominate all elements within society, to teach and guide them,

that churches place upon their members has come to be known in the literature as “strictness” and has been tied to church growth and various measures of church “strength” such as commitment of members to their church.<sup>132</sup> While the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is generally understood to have started as a sect that has moderated over time and lessened its conflictual relationship with governments and society, the SDA is still viewed as a strict religious group.<sup>133</sup>

As a particularly strict church, The Seventh-Day Adventist Church Manual includes an entire chapter on “Standards of Christian Living,” which gives instructions on a number of lifestyle issues.<sup>134</sup> This level of attention to the everyday details of life implies a strong value placed on personal holiness within the Seventh-Day Adventist denomination. Assuming that SDA church leaders are indoctrinated with these beliefs or chosen in part because of their conformity to these principles, it is reasonable to assume

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and to dispense saving grace to them by means of sacraments administered by ecclesiastical office holders. Although it contains organized expressions of the radical spirit of Christianity in its monastic system, it does not require its members to realize the divine law in their own behavior. It is conservative and allied with the upper classes” Johnson, Benton. “On Church and Sect.” *American Sociological Review* (1963): 539-549.

<sup>132</sup> Iannaccone, Laurence R. “Why Strict Churches are Strong.” *American Journal of Sociology* (1994): 1180-1211.

<sup>133</sup> Lawson, Ronald. “Broadening the Boundaries of Church-Sect Theory: Insights from the Evolution of the Nonschismatic Mission Churches of Seventh-day Adventism.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* (1998): 652-672; Cragun, Ryan T., and Ronald Lawson. “The Secular Transition: The Worldwide Growth of Mormons, Jehovah’s Witnesses, and Seventh-day Adventists.” *Sociology of Religion* 71.3 (2010): 349-373.

<sup>134</sup> *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual*. Chapter 13. This chapter includes instructions on lifestyle choices in areas such as health (which includes abstinence from alcohol, tobacco and other “intoxicants and narcotics”), dress, use of various forms of media, recreation, and entertainment.

that leaders place a high level of value on maintaining personal holiness, including adherence to the SDA doctrine on political involvement.

In line with this doctrine, Seventh-Day Adventist leaders were almost completely silent on political issues during Kenyatta's presidency. Nyaundi attributes this to Adventist doctrine. "Due to the official Adventist view of church and state, its relationship to the state in Kenya is a distant one, being neither openly friendly nor openly hostile."<sup>135</sup> There were a couple of incidents in which there were tensions with the government.<sup>136</sup> In neither instance does it appear that the Seventh-Day Adventist Church intended to provoke political controversy, nor did either lead to public disagreement from the SDA hierarchy. While the SDA would occasionally join its church counterparts in commenting on political issues during the later Moi and Kibaki presidencies, it remains starkly apolitical when compared to other Kenyan denominations during Kenyatta's presidency.

With the exception of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, however, the other denominations generally offered unequivocal support and loyalty to President Kenyatta during the early years of his presidency. The government did not place a high value of this support, given the alternative sources of legitimacy that Kenyatta enjoyed. Thus while Kenyatta and other government officials did offer some benefits to the churches, in terms of friendly relations and appearances at fundraising events, the "price" paid for

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<sup>135</sup> Nyaundi 1995: 208.

<sup>136</sup> The government took issue with the Kenyan Seventh-Day Adventist Church's links to the SDA in white dominated Rhodesia around 1968, and later the government pressured SDA farmers who were refusing to grow tea and coffee – substances which the SDA prohibits members from consuming but which are major cash crops for Kenya – to relax their stances.



church support was relatively low, as consistent with the low level of demand. Because associating with the popular government brought useful side benefits to the churches and their leaders, in terms of legitimizing church leaders and bringing positive reactions from current and potential church members, the churches generally offered their support despite the governments only mild interest in soliciting ideological support from the religious bodies.

### ***2.3.3 Preferences and Outcomes: Shared Church-Government Interests***

While, in these early years of Kenyatta's presidency, church leaders' needed to be legitimated by the government more than the government needed to be legitimated by the church, there was another aspect of church-state relations that provided significant benefits for both parties. The government and churches found it mutually advantageous to work together in social service provision. Through a combination of limited resources and ethno-regional favoritism, the government concentrated resources to provide social services in some areas, especially the Kikuyu homeland of Central Province, while leaving other regions, such as North East Province, underdeveloped. Even within the relatively well-funded areas such as Central Province and Nairobi, large classes of poor citizens found themselves underserved. Churches worked to reach both the urban and rural poor with a variety of social services such as health and education.<sup>137</sup> For the churches, helping the poor and needy was both an end unto itself and a useful recruitment strategy for winning converts among those being served. By serving these populations, the churches relieved some of the pressure on the government to provide services. The government found it cheaper in many instances to use the church to provide social

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<sup>137</sup> Hornsby 2013: 202, 309.

service. Due to the churches' motivations and resources, they would take on much of the cost and effort of providing services if partially subsidized or even simply allowed to do so without government interference. Furthermore, the government could support projects by soliciting donations through harambees, limiting the actual financial contribution made by the government. The government therefore supported church efforts through joint programs, partial subsidies and by making appearances at harambees, which encouraged private donations for church projects such as hospitals or schools.

Not all churches were equally equipped or equally motivated to provide social services. The Catholic and Anglican churches had the largest presence in service provision due to their size and scope throughout the country, and the government therefore found these two denominations to be the most useful partners, though the state also supported individual projects of smaller denominations. Though the other denominations in this study were not as large or widespread as the Catholic and Anglican churches, they were still significant presences in their respective communities and thus useful local partners for the government to work with in service provision.

One useful measure of the relative amounts of services provided by the denominations comes from examining the churches' role in education. Even after mission schools were formally nationalized by the government in 1968, churches were still allowed to "sponsor" schools, contributing to the financing and administration of these schools and maintaining access to them for the purposes of providing religious education to students. According to Barrett, by 1971, three-fourths (4706 of 6123) of the primary schools in Kenya were church sponsored, mostly by the churches covered in this

chapter.<sup>138</sup> Of the Christian-sponsored schools, almost 40% (1876) were Catholic-sponsored, followed by 16% (775) for the Anglican Church. The other three churches in this study combined for another 23% (1073), the majority of which were sponsored by the Africa Inland Church and its parent organization, the Africa Inland Mission.<sup>139</sup> All these churches, and especially the Catholic and Anglican Churches, were thus involved in most of the primary schools in the country even after the nationalization of their education systems. Church run hospitals, clinics and other health facilities also supplied half of the hospital beds in the country.<sup>140</sup> The mutual interests of the government and churches in cooperating for service provision thus provided further incentive for the churches, especially the larger and more equipped denominations, to maintain friendly relations with Kenyatta and his government.

#### ***2.3.4 Internal Church Organization and Political Outcomes***

In addition to church leaders' personal incentives to identify with Kenyatta and the churches' organizational interests in cooperating with the government for development work, the leaders of Kenya's churches also found themselves atop church structures that facilitated close relationships with the President and his top aides. Despite denominational differences in the various polities of the churches, in practice the churches operated along similar leadership lines. Executive authority was centralized in

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<sup>138</sup> Barrett, David B., ed. *Kenya Churches Handbook: The Development of Kenyan Christianity, 1498-1973*. Evangel Pub. House, 1973.

<sup>139</sup> Of the 4706 church-sponsored primary schools, 13% (642) were sponsored by the Africa Inland Church/Mission, 6% (275) by the Presbyterian Church and 3% (156) by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church.

<sup>140</sup> Hornsby 2013: 307.

a single leader. These highest-ranking officials possessed different titles within their churches: Archbishop (Catholic and Anglican), Moderator (Presbyterian), President/Bishop (Africa Inland Church), and President/Executive Director (Seventh-Day Adventist).<sup>141</sup> In theory, these executives were subject to oversight by governing bodies that were endowed with legislating and policy-making powers within their respective denominations.<sup>142</sup> In practice, however, oversight was limited. Except in times of crisis, these bodies only assembled periodically, their meetings ranging in frequency from twice per year to once every five years. This left the leader of each church in charge of most of the decision-making for his denomination. As stated in Argument 2, centralized church leadership and decision-making authority meant that a church leader could credibly claim to speak for his entire denomination when dealing with government officials.

Close examination of the Kenyan churches' internal structures highlights the importance of examining the actual structures and operations of institutions and not just their formal rules. The governance structures of Christian churches are generally derived from three distinct forms of administration (known as church polities) – episcopal, presbyterian and congregational. In theory, episcopal polity is the most hierarchical form of church polity and congregational the least hierarchical form, with hierarchy generally

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<sup>141</sup> The leaders of the African Inland Church and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church were both initially referred to as president, but in 1973 the Government of Kenya banned organizations from using the label “President” for reserving that title for Kenyatta alone. Hornsby 2013: 258.

<sup>142</sup> These governing bodies, with frequency of regular meetings in parentheses, are: the Catholic Kenya Episcopal Conference (twice per year), the Anglican Provincial Synod (Anglican), the Presbyterian General Assembly (Presbyterian), Central Church Council (Africa Inland Church), and the Quadrennial Session of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (once every 4 years). Beginning in 1970, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church Sessions became quinquennial (once every 5 years).

thought of as varying inversely to democracy. In practice, however, the ability of actors other than the top national leader to influence policy are dependent on internal factors that go beyond the form of church polity.

The Catholic and Anglican churches both operate on the episcopal model. The Catholic hierarchy during Kenyatta's time in power consisted of the Archbishop of Nairobi and a number of other suffragan bishops – seven such bishops at independence in 1963, thirteen by 1978 – administering dioceses throughout the country.<sup>143</sup> None of the other bishops rivaled Archbishop McCarthy; his position as the country's only archbishop, his proximity to political power due to his placement in Nairobi, and the fact that Kiambu district was included within his Archdiocese, all factored to place McCarthy as the highest representative of the Catholic Church in Kenya in the eyes of the government.

The Anglican Church has a similar episcopal leadership structure, with an archbishop and bishops who preside over administer priests within their respective dioceses.<sup>144</sup> Archbishop Beecher resided over the Anglican Church, which at the time included both Kenya and Tanzania in a single church hierarchy, officially known as the

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<sup>143</sup> Data drawn from Cheney, David M. *Catholic Hierarchy* website. [www.catholic-hierarchy.org](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org). Accessed September 9, 2014.

<sup>144</sup> The Catholic and Anglican churches both operated according to an "Episcopal" structure, in which authority at each level is wielded by a single individual- priests at the local level, bishops at the provincial/state level, and archbishops at the regional or national level. The second form of church polity is the presbyterian model. In this model, authority at each level is invested by representative bodies (some of which are known as presbyteries), culminating in a national assembly. In the final form of church polity, the congregational model, local congregations are largely autonomous, and regional and national bodies largely serve coordination roles, as the local congregations are generally not bound to follow directives made at a higher level.

Church of the Province of East Africa.<sup>145</sup> In theory, Anglican Archbishop Beecher occupied a very similar role as Catholic Archbishop McCarthy due to the centralization of national-level authority within both denominations. However, compared to the Catholic Church at the time, the Anglican Church structure provides checks and balance in its administrative structure by providing the individual dioceses with significantly more autonomy; bishops are elected within their dioceses and are autonomous in administering their territory; the Archbishop is regarded as more of a “first among equals” among the bishops.<sup>146</sup> Archbishop Olang himself acknowledged that the Anglican Church in Kenya was “a federation of largely self-governing dioceses linked together for convenience, mutual support, guidance and fellowship.”<sup>147</sup> This degree of bishops’ autonomy would eventually contribute to the Anglican Church’s increasingly oppositional stances (particularly in the Moi era).

Initially, however, the effects of the Anglican structure were mitigated by a few factors. At independence, there were only three other Anglican bishops in the country besides Archbishop Beecher, and the bishop who administered the Mount Kenya Diocese (which encompassed the Kikuyu districts such as Kiambu, Nyeri and Muranga) was Kenyatta’s brother-in-law, Obadiah Kariuki, who was supportive of Kenyatta from

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<sup>145</sup> Archbishop Beecher’s retirement coincided with the division of the church into independent provinces in Kenya and Tanzania.

<sup>146</sup> This is similar to the relationship of the various national Anglican Churches to the Church of England, in which the Archbishop of Canterbury is considered *primus inter pares* among the Anglican prelates.

<sup>147</sup> *Target* July 20-26, 1975.

colonial times through the bishop's retirement in 1976.<sup>148</sup> Thus, the "checks and balances" that came with bishops' autonomy actually worked in favor of President Kenyatta as long as the Archbishop was politically vulnerable and one of the most prominent bishops was a relative and friend of the President, but once this special set of circumstances ended, the oppositional tendencies that the Anglican structure promoted would begin to manifest.

Though in theory the presbyterian form of church polity (which is the governance structure of the eponymous Presbyterian Church as well as other denominations) distributes power more broadly than the episcopal model, as representative bodies hold positions of authority comparable to those held by individual priests or bishops in the Episcopal churches).<sup>149</sup> In practice, however, the Presbyterian Church in Kenya concentrates executive authority in the Moderator and his subordinate, the Secretary General.<sup>150</sup> The Seventh-Day Adventist Church combines the presbyterian structure with elements of episcopal governance, and also places its national leader in a position of centralized authority. Likewise, the Africa Inland Church's administrative structure, while combining elements of the Presbyterian structure and the more decentralized

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<sup>148</sup> Festo Olang, a Luhya bishop who was elected Archbishop in 1970, administered Maseno diocese, encompassing the western portion of the country; Australian Bishop Neville Langford-Smith resided over Nakuru Diocese, covering the Rift Valley area; and Obadiah Kariuki, a Kikuyu and President Kenyatta's brother-in-law, was the bishop of Mount Kenya Diocese, which covered all of Central Province. In 1964, Peter Mwang'ombe was elected to administer a new Mombasa Diocese covering the coastal region of Kenya.

<sup>149</sup> The governing bodies within these churches are sometimes known as "presbyteries," based on an old Greek and later Latin terms for elders. "presbyter, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University press, March 2014. Web. 4 April 2014.

<sup>150</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 156.

congregational model, nonetheless concentrates national power in a single leader. Ironically, the relatively decentralized nature of these three denominations' middle and lower level bureaucracies make it difficult for individuals at the local or regional level to amass their own prominence or influence within their denominations, thus leaving the national leadership's authority to speak for their entire denominations unchallenged. This combination of lower level decentralization and top-level centralization came into play in the later Kenyatta years and especially during the Moi era. Developments in the episcopal polity denominations (the Anglican and Catholic Churches) introduced elements of checks and balances or decentralization of leadership within these two denominations. The structural changes within these two churches coincided with increased criticisms of the government, while the other denominations maintained centralization at the top and were more hesitant to criticize the government.

From the point of view of the government, having a single leader not only raises the level of confidence that the government has in the church leader's ability to speak for the church as a whole, but it also means that the church can be persuaded to cooperate more cheaply (Argument 3). As noted above, church leaders had multiple incentives to associate themselves with popular governments such as Kenyatta's; the government could therefore "buy" church support at little or no cost. When associating with a popular leader, the only possible costs to a church leader are incurred if he has personal qualms or beliefs against offering support to the government or if support would somehow lower the quality of church members. While it is generally unlikely that supporting the government would have a clear effect on church member quality, there are reasonable scenarios under which a church leader may think it inappropriate to politicize



himself or his church by offering support to politicians or governments. And even if a leader has no qualms about supporting a government per se, he may find moral issues with supporting a particular president, even if that president is popular. In such a scenario, the government will either have to pay some amount (in subsidies to the leader or to the church as an organization) in exchange for support, or the government will decide that the church leader's "price" is too high and forego church support. Adding a second national leader to a church's hierarchy would increase the probability that one of these leaders would have a moral or personal objection to supporting the government, which would in turn make church support less likely, and/or more costly for the government.<sup>151</sup>

Church leaders' personal preferences toward supporting government are not determined randomly, but are based on a number of factors beyond personal idiosyncrasies, including denomination (as seen by comparing the SDA Church to the other denominations). In Kenya, as in many countries in Africa and elsewhere, ethnic and regional identities influence church leaders as well. This is both because of leaders' individual preferences as members of certain communities, and because of the preferences of the members they directly lead. Since decentralization of church leadership generally has a regional component, such as creating archdioceses in major cities throughout a country, it often serves to increase the influence of marginalized or excluded groups within churches, giving these communities' religious leaders veto power or other influence over church policies. The regional character of decentralization further

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<sup>151</sup> Each church leader in this scenario acts as a veto player regarding official church policies.

increases the probability that decentralized leadership will lead to less support for government.

Besides lowering the price that the government has to pay for support and lowering the probability of church support being vetoed by a church leader because of his personal qualms or ethno-regional interests, centralized leadership also facilitates negotiation between church leaders and government officials (Argument 1a). President Kenyatta wielded power in a very personalistic fashion, doling out favors and money in face-to-face meetings.<sup>152</sup> Church leaders took advantage of this. Catholic Archbishop McCarthy spoke of his fondness for President Kenyatta in a 1965 interview, noting that he “often” talked to Kenyatta and that the President helped fund Catholic education in the country.<sup>153</sup> Kenyatta’s main link to the Anglican Church appears to have not been Archbishop Beecher, but rather Kenyatta’s brother-in-law, Bishop Obadiah Kariuki.<sup>154</sup> Charles Muhoro Kareri, PCEA Moderator from 1961-1967, was an associate of Kenyatta from colonial times, has been described as a “counselor” and “beloved consultant” of President Kenyatta.<sup>155</sup> Though not religious, Kenyatta had been educated in the

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<sup>152</sup> Branch 2011: 72-74.

<sup>153</sup> *The Tablet (London)*. July 17, 1965.

<sup>154</sup> Beecher had been wary of Kenyatta during colonial times due to his alleged Mau Mau links. After independence, Beecher was supportive of the President, as demonstrated above, but does not appear to have been particularly close to Kenyatta. Kariuki, in contrast, was a relative of the President and remained a defender of Kenyatta even after the bishop’s retirement.

<sup>155</sup> Ward, Kevin, and Emma Wild-Wood, eds. *The East African Revival: History and Legacies*. Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2012: 34; Benedetto, Robert, and Donald K. McKim. *Historical Dictionary of the Reformed Churches*. Vol. 99. Scarecrow Press, 2009: 241; Muita, Isaiah Wahome. *Hewn from the Quarry: Presbyterian Church of East Africa 100 Years and Beyond*. Presbyterian Church of East Africa, 2003: 172. Though retired,

Presbyterian Church and remained supportive of the denomination. Though Kenyatta was usually sent one or more of his cabinet ministers to represent the President at the major churches' events, Kenyatta personally attended several Presbyterian events throughout his presidency.<sup>156</sup> AIC President Andrew Wambari was not close to President Kenyatta, nor were the Seventh-Day Adventist leaders.<sup>157</sup> These two denominations were generally silent on political issues throughout Kenyatta's presidency.

While not openly supportive of President Kenyatta, these two denominations were not hostile or critical toward the President, in keeping with the cordial relationships that all the major churches enjoyed with the government during the first few years of Kenya's independence. Prior to 1970, there were only two instances of significant church opposition to the government. The next section details the dispute between the government and the Catholic Church over school reform in 1968, while the following section discusses the clash between the government and the major churches concerning Kikuyu oath-taking ceremonies the following year.

### **3 Church Opposition to Kenyatta: The Catholic Church and School Reform, 1968**

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Kareri preached the sermon at President Kenyatta's funeral in 1978; see *Daily Nation*, September 1, 1978.

<sup>156</sup> Kenyatta personally attended the Presbyterian Church's 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration in 1968, opening Chogoria Hospital in 1971, laying the cornerstone of the new Presbyterian offices in Nairobi in 1972, and even as late as 1977 hosting a ceremony to donate to a local Presbyterian church in honor of a deceased reverend with whom he was friends (*Daily Nation*, March 25, 1968; *Target*, April 1971; *Target* October 23, 1972).

<sup>157</sup> The Africa Inland Mission leadership had opposed the churches' meeting with Kenyatta after the latter's release in 1961, though it is unclear if Wambari was involved in the decision-making process regarding this meeting. See Ngunyi 1995: 133; Chepkwony 1987: 87.

### ***3.1 The Church and Education in Kenya***

Education in pre-independence Kenya was mainly within the purview of the churches. The vast majority of the schools in the country were mission schools. The main Protestant churches largely ran their schools through the Christian Churches' Educational Association (CCEA), while the Catholic Church had its own internal system for managing Catholic schools. The government had long recognized the role of the churches in education. In 1949, the colonial government tasked Anglican L.J. Beecher (who would later become Archbishop) to chair a committee to make recommendation on improving the school system. The so-called "Beecher Report" was controversial among the African population. Although it promoted expanded educational opportunities for Africans, it did not push for universal primary education and emphasized practical training for Africans.<sup>158</sup> Not surprisingly, the report also advocated for retaining a large role for the church in providing and monitoring education. Although these recommendations offered some improvements in the way the government was to approach African education, the African population was disappointed and rejected the Beecher proposals.

The colonial government was aware of the political role of education. Mission schools were used as alternative to Mau Mau<sup>159</sup>. On the other side of the Mau Mau conflict was the AIPCA church, which operated mainly among the Kikuyu, had grown out of the Kikuyu Independent School Association (KISA) and was involved in hundreds

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<sup>158</sup> Walter, Rodney. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. London. Bogle L'ouverture (1972): 265.

<sup>159</sup> Sabar 2002: 48-51.

of schools. The colonial government viewed the AIPCA as a Mau Mau sympathizer, and when the government declared a state of emergency in 1952, the church was banned, and its schools were seized and given to other, more loyal, denominations such as the Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches.<sup>160</sup> KANU also recognize the political aspect of education. The KANU manifesto of 1963 set as among the party's main goals universal primary education in Kenya, along with expanded secondary and university education.<sup>161</sup>

On the eve of independence, the churches sought to reaffirm their primacy in providing education for Kenyans. A joint statement was issued by Anglican Bishop Obadiah Kariuki, who chaired the CCEA, and Catholic Archbishop J.J. McCarthy. The purpose of the statement is best summed up in the following: "As the State takes over more and more responsibility for the administration of schools, the position of the Church in educational matters must be safeguarded to ensure that she can carry out her divine commission and give service of the highest quality"<sup>162</sup> The statement, while affirming the rights of the state in providing education and enforcing standards, placed emphasis on the divine rights of parents and the church in education youth.

For its part, the government signaled early on its desire to assume greater control of education from the churches. In 1964, the Minister for Education at the time, Joseph

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid.: 49.

<sup>161</sup> Eshiwani, George S. *Education in Kenya Since Independence*. East African Publishers, 1993: 10-11.

<sup>162</sup> Statement reproduced in Cowan, Laing Gray, James O'Connell, and David G. Scanlon, eds. *Education and Nation-building in Africa*. Vol. 571. FA Praeger, 1965: 182-184.

Otiende, stated the aim of greater government control of education for the purpose of nation-building, arguing that the system of education based on church and mission schools ‘placed the Christian Churches in a position of privilege which has become inconsistent with the kind of national society, the building of which we are dedicated to today.’<sup>163</sup> The government’s 1964 Kenya Education Commission Report, generally known as the Ominde Report, proceeded along similar lines. The Ominde Report argued that ““the time had come to relieve the churches of their remaining responsibilities for the management of maintained schools””, while also continuing to ““secure the continuing participation of the church in the religious life of the school.””<sup>164</sup> The report recommended the mission schools be handed over to the government, and required this transfer specifically for high schools and teacher-training colleges.<sup>165</sup> The Catholic Church totally rejected these recommendations, while the Anglican Church engaged in minimal compliance, transferring most of its upper level schools to the government.<sup>166</sup> The Anglican Church took advantage of loopholes in the Ominde Report recommendations, most notably those related to church sponsorship of schools and harambee schools, to maintain much of the Church’s de facto control over its primary schools.<sup>167</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> *East African Standard*. January 30, 1964.

<sup>164</sup> Farrelly, Thomas. “Religious Education in the Schools” in *Kenya Churches Handbook* (49-50).

<sup>165</sup> Sabar 2002: 89.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid: 90-91.

<sup>167</sup> Sabar 2002: 100.

### ***3.2 Catholic Church Opposition to the Education Act of 1968***

The Education Act of 1968 formalized the recommendations of the Ominde Report. The Act officially transferred all primary education in the country from the control of the missions to the government. The governments administered schools, hired faculty, paid salaries, provided equipment and opened new schools. The rights of church “sponsors” were delineated and limited, allowing the churches to administer religious education in the school and use school facilities after-hours.<sup>168</sup> With the Education Act closing the loopholes created by the Ominde Report reforms, the Anglican Church complied with the new system. Archbishop Beecher said “the Anglican Church has reached a stage where [it is] proud to hand over control and management of schools to the government...We feel this step is only right and that the churches can now embark on other ways of helping build a strong and progressive nation.”<sup>169</sup> The Protestant churches also complied with the government takeover of mission schools.

The Catholic Church, in contrast, put up a sustained and public fight. During the parliamentary debates over the Education Bill in January of 1968, the new Minister for Education, Dr. J.G. Kiano, had successfully opposed amendments that would have increased the churches’ authority over sponsored schools. The Catholic Church responded by releasing a series of statements to the Kenyan press expressing the Church’s objections to the content of the Education Act and displeasure over what the clergy saw as a failure of the government to properly consult with the churches ahead of

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<sup>168</sup> Stabler, Ernest. *Education Since Uhuru: The Schools of Kenya*. Wesleyan University Press, 1969: 30.

<sup>169</sup> *Catholic Mirror*, February 1968. Reproduced in Sabar 2002: 99.

time. The Catholic Church's statements escalated in the prominence of their authors and the content of their criticisms. First was a statement from John Njenga, at the time the Education Secretary for the Nairobi Archdiocese, released on January 21. He flatly contradicted statements made by Dr. Kiano in parliament indicating that the churches had been consulted prior to the publishing of the Education Bill, and chided the Minister for Education for striking down the amendments that would have addressed church concerns.<sup>170</sup> This statement was followed by a letter to the editor published in the Daily Nation newspaper on January 25, written by Caesar Gatimu, Bishop of Nyeri. The bishop reiterated the Church's stand on the defeated amendments and laid out in great detail instances where the church was ignored, either by an inability to secure meetings with government officials, or by being reassured during meetings only to find their concerns unaddressed in the subsequent legislation.<sup>171</sup> Finally, on February 1, a statement was released signed by the bishops of all nine Catholic dioceses and Archbishop McCarthy of Nairobi Archdiocese.<sup>172</sup> This statement kept the defiant tone of the others, lambasting the government for both failing to consult with the Catholic Church and ignoring the Church's written advice. The bishops' letter went on to detail several specific objections the Church has to the bill as it was written.

First, the bishops complained that the bill took away from the Church the power to determine the content of religious education through "syllabus, books and curricula" and gave this power over to the government. Second, the bishops complained that "we

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<sup>170</sup> *Daily Nation*. January 22, 1968.

<sup>171</sup> *Daily Nation*. January 25, 1968.

<sup>172</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 2, 1968.



are not allowed to enter the schools during the period of religious instruction to assist our teachers,” even for schools founded by the Church. Third, the Education Act reduced the amount of time provided for religious instruction and left open the possibility of further reductions. Finally, the new law did not guarantee that the headmasters or staff of former church schools share the faith of the founding church.

Dr. Kiano attempted the following week to reassure the churches that they would continue to play a vital role in religious education in Kenyan schools.<sup>173</sup> A follow-up statement from Catholic Church spokesmen rejected this pledge, acknowledging a cordial relationship with the Education Department but also stating that the Church could not rely on “reassuring speeches.”<sup>174</sup> Instead, the Catholic Church reiterated some of the previous objections in the form of specific requests for changes to the law. The Church demanded that the Bill be amended to include three specific rights for church sponsors of schools: 1) the “right of entry,” referring the Church’s ability to enter schools in order to inspect religious education, 2) a “right of selection and recommendation”, giving the Church a voice in the selection of staff for schools run or sponsored by the Church, and 3) “the right to control the movement or placing of [the Church’s] own staff, such as nuns, sisters, priests and in certain cases foreign teachers.”

Dr. Kiano’s initial response to these demands was to take a hard-line approach. He bluntly stated that the government “cannot make any special provisions for any special groups, religious or otherwise”, while claiming that both Catholic Archbishop McCarthy and Anglican Archbishop Beecher had assured him of continued church

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<sup>173</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 8, 1986.

<sup>174</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 19, 1968.

cooperation with government. Kiano declared that “from now on the campaign against the Education Act must come to an end,” giving assurances that the fears of religious organizations were unfounded and expressing a desire to meet with religious leaders soon.<sup>175</sup> While Archbishop Beecher did not issue a response to this claim, Archbishop McCarthy immediately doubled down on the Catholic Church’s opposition. McCarthy claimed that he had not given the assurance claimed by Dr. Kiano and expressed shock at having read the report, essentially accusing the Education Minister of lying in the press. While affirming the strong support given by the Catholic Church to the government generally, the Archbishop nevertheless argued that when it came to the Education Bill “we cannot reasonably be expected to cooperate in anything which would deprive us of our God-given right to teach the children entrusted to our care.”<sup>176</sup>

With the public exchanges between the Catholic bishops and Dr. Kiano growing increasingly confrontational, the Minister for Education blinked. He clarified in the press that his previous statement had been misquoted and that he was merely referring to various statements by Archbishop McCarthy concerning the Church’s cooperation with the government on issues of education generally, not specific cooperation concerning the disputed sections of the 1968 Education Bill.<sup>177</sup> Dr. Kiano announced that talks were occurring between the Ministry for Education and the churches. This move on the part of the Minister for Education ended the public feud between the government and the Catholic Church. Kiano would update parliament on the talks between his Ministry and

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<sup>175</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 21, 1968.

<sup>176</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 22, 1968.

<sup>177</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 23, 1968.

church officials from various denominations, including the Catholic Church.<sup>178</sup> Finally, a joint statement released in April by the Ministry of Education and representatives for both the Catholic Church and the CCEA announced agreement on new regulations that addressed church concerns, as well as a pledge to regular consultation between the Ministry and the churches to review the implementation of the education reforms. This statement also pledged the churches' "continued loyalty and co-operation" in the field of education.<sup>179</sup> As a postscript to the debate, Catholic Bishop Caesar Gatimu remarked on the resolution of the controversy during his Easter sermon that April, thanking President Kenyatta for assisting the churches during the disagreement with the Ministry of Education (though without specifying what help the President had provided).

Subsequent reports detail the fruits of the new cooperative framework set up between the government and the churches for education. The government created a new position for a religious education inspector for the nation's schools; notably, this position initially went to an Irish Catholic priest who had spent many years working in education in Kenya.<sup>180</sup> The Catholic and Protestant churches were initially allowed to operate using different syllabi for primary education while working to draw up a joint syllabus acceptable to all the relevant denominations.<sup>181</sup> Work on various iterations of this joint syllabus continued into the later years of Kenyatta's time in power, and the government

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<sup>178</sup> *Daily Nation*. March 15, 1968.

<sup>179</sup> *Daily Nation*. April 5, 1968.

<sup>180</sup> *Target* March 1971.

<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*

facilitated cooperation between itself, the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches through various.<sup>182</sup>

### ***3.3 Explaining Catholic Church Response to School Reform***

Why did the Catholic Church, and only the Catholic Church, put up such a fight against the requirements of the 1986 Education Bill? Understanding this incident requires an understanding of the relevant preferences of the Catholic Church (compared to those of other denominations) and the government. The first, and most obvious answer is that the Catholics had more to lose. The education reforms entailed a loss of both physical resources, in terms of church facilities, and human capital, as the government became the new employer of the teachers at the formerly church-operated schools. The Catholic Church was the largest provider of education in Kenya, and thus lost the most in terms of schools. Though education statistics from this period are fairly unreliable, some basic comparisons can be discerned. Father John Njenga's 1968 statement claimed the Catholic Church ran one-fifth of all primary schools in the country. Sabar (2002) gives a significantly higher number, estimating that the Catholic Church funded 55% of all church schools in 1963 and 60% in 1967, compared to 29% and 33% for the Anglican Church in these years.<sup>183</sup> In absolute terms, this amounted to over 2000 Catholic schools.

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<sup>182</sup> See *Target* November 25, 1972; February 6, 1973; April 20, 1975; June 1, 1975; January 11, 1976.

<sup>183</sup> Sabar 2002: 92-9, 102-103. The author notes significant problems with getting exact counts of church-run schools, including inconsistent records, changing definitions within the school system, varying levels of involvements by the church in different schools, and overlapping sponsorship among different churches and other organizations. Nonetheless, these figures highlight the prominence of the Catholic Church as the most significant organization in providing education in Kenya.

In addition to the lost physical resources, the education reforms represented a loss of human capital as well. The Catholic Church employed a number of its members as teachers and school staff. In particular, the Catholics had the largest number of missionaries in Kenya of any denomination.<sup>184</sup> Missionaries in Kenya were heavily involved in education.<sup>185</sup> The Education Bill gave the government power to transfer Catholic personnel to other schools, potentially non-Catholic schools, and to place non-Catholic personnel in Catholic schools. While the Catholic Church thus had more human and physical resources to lose, the other churches also possessed significant amounts of school property and employed large numbers of domestic and missionary teachers. This suggests that if the physical and human resources were the only factors, the Catholic Church might be expected to be the loudest voice protesting the education reform, but not the only one. In addition to being a loss of human and physical capital, the education reforms also represented a loss of government subsidies, though some churches instead viewed it as a financial benefit, relieving them of many of the expenses of providing education services while still allowing the churches access for religious education.<sup>186</sup>

To fully understand why the Catholic Church alone objected to the government takeover, it is necessary to understand both the importance and the content of Catholic education. For the churches, education was an extremely useful tool. It allowed them to

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<sup>184</sup> Barnett (1982) cites the total number of Catholic missionaries in Kenya in 1973 at around 1500, as compared to 1062 protest missionaries. (437).

<sup>185</sup> Njoroge, Lawrence. *A Century of Catholic Endeavour: Holy Ghost and Consolata Missions in Kenya*. Paulines Publications Africa, 1999.

<sup>186</sup> In the words of Father Baur (1990), ‘the former system of subsidies to mission schools has come to an end.’ (225)

evangelize large segments of the population, exposing them to the churches' doctrines during their impressionable years. In addition to winning new converts, education was a very useful tool for training church members in the content of church doctrines and instilling in them the desire to follow these church teachings. Controlling education thus had large impact for church membership, in terms of both quantity and faithfulness. So important was education that in 1928, the Pope's representative to Anglophone Africa advised the assembled bishops of these countries that "where it is impossible for you to carry on both the immediate task of evangelisation and your educational work, neglect your churches in order to perfect your schools."<sup>187</sup>

Even though other churches similarly valued education for its evangelistic and catechistic uses, the non-Catholic denominations were satisfied that their access to the schools for religious instruction would be sufficient to fulfill those roles. While the Education Act made arrangements for the churches to carry out religious education, it did not seek to address denomination-specific religious doctrines. Indeed, the Minister for Education's comments during debate on the bill suggested a desire to downplay denominational differences.<sup>188</sup> After the bill had become law, Dr. Kiano's initial rhetoric was no less accommodating of specific Catholic concerns. On the contrary, he expressed hope that the Catholic Church would not try to seek 'special privileges' over other religious groups.<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Njoroge 1999: 232-233.

<sup>188</sup> *Daily Nation*. January 16, 1968.

<sup>189</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 21, 1968.

The Catholic Church is especially sensitive to dangers presented by homogenized religious instruction. Catholicism has a much more extensive set of doctrines developed and collected into holy tradition and canon law over two millennia, whereas the younger denominations tended to have fewer specific doctrines outside of those contained in the Bible, as keeping with the *sola scriptura* emphasis of the Protestant Reformation. During colonial times, the Catholic Church sought “independence to develop a system with Catholic religious character for Catholic schools”, and eschewed government aid in order to keep its independence.<sup>190</sup> In fact, of the major churches, it was the Seventh-Day Adventists who come closest to the Catholics in terms of denomination-specific doctrines, and this church also hesitant of government control of education, though the SDA eventually opted to cede control rather than fight.<sup>191</sup> With the requirement of creating a joint syllabus for religious education, the Catholic Church faced the prospect of religious instruction that focused on common denominator Christian principles, an approach that inherently favors Protestant denominations (who therefore accepted the new framework) while excluding much of Catholic doctrine. For the Protestant churches, then, the reforms could be seen as a more efficient subsidy, allowing them to continue religious education while relieving the burden of funding the secular aspects of education

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<sup>190</sup> Waihenya, Waithaka and Fr Ndikaru wa Teresia *A Voice Unstilled: Archbishop Ndingi Mwana a-Nzeki*. Longhorn Publishers. 2009: 49.

<sup>191</sup> Prior to independence, the Seventh-Day Adventist leadership in Kenya, dominated at the time by missionaries, opted to stop receiving government funds in order to maintain independence over curriculum, but the financial ramifications of this decision and pressure from Kenyan church members forced them to reverse course. Amayo, Gershom N. *A History of the Adventist Christian Education in Kenya: Illustrated in the Light of its Impact on the Africans' Social, Economic, Religious, and Political Development, 1906-1963*. Diss. Howard University, 1973.

as well. For the Catholic Church, however, the reforms represented a loss, as it would no longer be able to provide the type of education it saw as necessary to convert new Catholics and properly train existing ones. The Catholic Church therefore sought to have a greater voice in determining the content and implementation of religious education in order to avoid having its teachings, and therefore its members, lost in the new system.

Given the public rebuke that the government suffered from its spat with the Catholic Church, coming at the politically sensitive time when there was a formal opposition party in parliament, it is also necessary to explain why the government chose its course of action.<sup>192</sup> From the perspective of the government, it may initially appear that the government was taking on an additional expense by taking on the cost of administering services previously provided by the churches. In order for the government to rationally choose to take on this expense, at least one of two conditions must apply. First, the government could believe that the overall cost of directly providing education was less costly than providing subsidies. Given that the government was assuming a large financial obligation in financing schools, this was clearly not the case. Government expenditure on education rose from 14.6% of the total budget in 1963 to 30% in 1970/1971 and 36.3% in 1976/1977, with the large majority of these expenditures used to pay teacher salaries.<sup>193</sup>

The other rational explanation is that the government believed that taking on this extra expense would create greater returns to education. Government control of

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<sup>192</sup> In fact, some members of the opposition KPU party criticized the Education Bill, with one KPU official calling it “ ‘a slap in the face’ and ‘a violation of the role of the Christian church.’ ” *East African Standard* 1968.

<sup>193</sup> Eshiwani 1993: 133.



education served two purposes. First, it allowed the government to exercise quality control. Rather than leaving education in the hands of the churches, which were primarily concerned with the religious aspects of education, the government-controlled education system could focus on instilling the skills and knowledge necessary to produce economically productive citizens. This would in turn promote economic growth and ultimately raise tax revenues for the government. Second, government control of schools would shift the ideological focus of education away from religion and toward citizenship. Thus, government control of education also represented an enhancement of pro-government ideology through schooling, which would lower the cost of ruling. By allowing churches continued access to schools to conduct religious education, the government believed that it could accomplish these changes without lowering church support.

This scheme in fact worked for the Protestant churches, but the government initially miscalculated by assuming the Catholic reaction would be similar. Bureaucratic changeover during the markup of the bill may have contributed to this error; Dr. Kiano only assumed the position of Minister for Education in January 1968, just as the bill was being debated in parliament.<sup>194</sup> There was also a desire on the part of the government to downplay denominational differences, which both Otiende as Education Minister in 1964 and Kiano as Education Minister in 1968 both cited as detrimental to national unity. Thus, a combination of conflicting goals and bureaucratic shortcomings led to the government adopting an education policy that was initially unacceptable to the Catholic

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<sup>194</sup> *Daily Nation*, January 9, 1968.

Church, but even with these problems, the Catholic Church was soon brought on board with the changing policy.

The central argument of this dissertation is that preferences alone are insufficient for understanding church-state relations and ultimately church political stances; an understanding of internal church structure is necessary as well. The public feud between the Government and the Catholic Church demonstrates the usefulness and limitations of this perspective. As detailed in the Church's accounts of failed meetings and broken guarantees, this dispute arose from a breakdown in negotiation between the government and the Church. Nevertheless, the incident also shows that such private negotiations were the preferred method by which the Catholic Church sought to address its concerns. Only when the government seemed unresponsive and uninterested of working out these issues privately, and subsequently defeated amendments to the Education Bill that would have addressed Church concerns, did the Catholic Church take its complaints public.

As noted above, Archbishop McCarthy had in 1965 referred to having conversations with President Kenyatta "often" and specifically cited the President's efforts to fund Catholic education in Kenya as evidence of the good relationship between the Kenyatta government and the Church. In contrast to these top-level meetings between the Catholic Church and the government, the initial fight in 1968 was between various subordinates within the Catholic Church and the government who were delegated control over the education policies of their respective organizations. It was only when Archbishop McCarthy publicly challenged Dr. Kiano's account of previous negotiations that the latter dropped his hardline stance and sought accommodation with the Church. The fact that Kiano justified his position by claiming to have had a prior, heretofore

unpublicized, agreement specifically with the Catholic and Anglican Archbishops acknowledges that direct high-level private negotiations were the norm.<sup>195</sup> It appears that President Kenyatta also directly intervened to help bring a resolution to the public spat. This resolution does also demonstrate, however, that these informal high-level negotiations were not the only way in which the churches and governments dealt with one another. After Archbishop McCarthy's comments and Dr. Kiano's response got negotiations going, the Church let its designated officials in charge of education policy handle the details, and the final agreement created institutionalized mechanisms for contact between church and government bureaucrats to manage the implementation of the agreements reached.

## **4 Church Opposition Under Kenyatta: The Oathing Controversy**

### ***4.1 The Churches' Respond to Oathing***

The year 1969 saw two distinct yet related events that negatively colored the Kenyatta presidency. On July 5, Tom Mboya, Kenya's Minister of Economic Planning and Development, was gunned down while running errands in downtown Nairobi. The popular politician had been a presumed major contender to follow Kenyatta as president. Mboya was a Luo, one of the largest ethnic groups in Kenya, with its home in the western

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<sup>195</sup> Archbishop McCarthy's response to the Education Minister demonstrates a notable qualification to the main argument of this dissertation: while top-level centralization of church leadership facilitates church support for government by easing cooperation between the church and political rulers, this centralized structure can also be effective for directing church opposition in cases where cooperation breaks down, though the next chapter will demonstrate that decentralized churches are equally effective at opposing governments when negotiations break down or church and government preferences are incompatible.

portion of the country. His murder sparked shock and anger across the country, especially from the Luo community.<sup>196</sup> Speculation around his murder pointed fingers at the Kikuyu clique surrounding Kenyatta.<sup>197</sup>

In response to the anti-Kikuyu feelings permeating the country and particularly to political opposition from the Luo community, the latter part of 1969, an election year, saw a series of “oathing” ceremonies among members of the Kikuyu ethnic group. During the Mau Mau uprising, Kikuyu participants swore oaths of loyalty in ceremonies involving consumption of goat’s blood and flesh. In 1969, Kikuyu were encouraged or compelled to engaged in similar ceremonies, pledging to keep the presidency in Kikuyu hands. Unwilling participants were harassed and threatened. A Presbyterian elder was beaten to death for resisting the practice.<sup>198</sup> Several ceremonies occurred near the President’s residence, implying Kenyatta’s support.<sup>199</sup> During the summer of 1969, oathing had become very widespread among the Kikuyu community. There were reports that the Meru and Embu, related ethnic groups, were also being oathed, as were members of the Kamba.<sup>200</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> In the days after the murder, both President Kenyatta and Vice-President Moi had their cars stoned by angry protestors (Hornsby 2013: 208).

<sup>197</sup> The sole person arrested and convicted of the murder was Nahashon Isaac Njenga, a Kikuyu man. Upon his arrest, he alluded to a “big man” who was not being held accountable. The above account of Tom Mboya’s death and its aftermath draws from Gimode, Edwin. *Tom Mboya*. Vol. 5. East African Publishers, 1996: 49-51.

<sup>198</sup> Hornsby 2013: 211-212.

<sup>199</sup> Branch 2011: 85.

<sup>200</sup> Hornsby 2013: 211-212.

Although the opposition KPU party first brought the phenomenon to public attention by complaining about the process in Parliament in mid-August, these reports were vigorously denied by the government. The Christian churches became involved in opposing the oaths in September. The churches responded to the crisis due to the havoc and confusion these ceremonies were causing among church members, who were being forced to take the oaths against their Christian morals or brutalized for refusing. The initial church opposition consisted of “unofficial” actions from local clergy and regional church leaders in those areas at the center of the oathing crisis, such as Catholic Bishop Raphael Ndingi of Machakos (the homeland of the Kamba, one of the ethnic groups being forced to take the oath).<sup>201</sup>

The national leadership of the churches learned of the oathing crisis from their lower clergy. As usual, the initial tactic of church leaders was to meet with Kenyatta and express their opposition to oathing, particularly on the grounds that Christians were being forced to take the oath or brutalized for refusing. The Catholic Archbishop for Kenya, J.J. McCarthy, was informed by his bishops of the practice, but declined to personally confront his “friend” Kenyatta over the issue.<sup>202</sup> The Archbishop instead decided to send a delegation of Kikuyu clergy led by Bishop Caesar Gatimu of Nyeri. According to insider accounts, the meeting proceeded contentiously until the clergymen informed the President that religious sisters were being forcibly oathed, at which point the President promised that such incidents would stop. Other church leaders visited Kenyatta as well.

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<sup>201</sup> Bishop Ndingi was perhaps the most prominent church figure in this early opposition. The bishop publicly decried the oath, sarcastically exclaiming that he would also like to visit the President (Hornsby 2013: 208).

<sup>202</sup> Waihenya 2009: 62.

On multiple occasions, a delegation of church leaders visited the President, consisting of Bishop Obadiah Kariuki (Anglican Bishop of Mount Kenya), Crispus Kiongo (Presbyterian Moderator), John Gatu (Presbyterian General Secretary) and Andrew Wambari Gichuha (President of the African Inland Church).<sup>203</sup> It is unclear if Bishop Kariuki was acting on behalf of his superior, Archbishop Beecher;<sup>204</sup> the others represented the highest leaders of their respective churches. During these meetings, President Kenyatta was dismissive of the oath-taking claims. Kenyatta would spend the latter part of August and most of September on the Coast, effectively limiting the opportunity for further private negotiations with the national church leaders who operated in or near Nairobi.<sup>205</sup>

It was only after these private visits failed to have an impact that the issue became a public debate. On August 12, an opposition MP raised the issue in Parliament, including mention of the church leaders' visits to Kenyatta; the government denied the allegations.<sup>206</sup> The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) publication *Target*, on September 1 published an issue with several articles from Anglican Church officials directly opposing oath-taking.<sup>207</sup> The article writers were careful to only criticize Kenyatta

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<sup>203</sup> *East African Standard*. October 20, 2004.

<sup>204</sup> When Beecher later made a public statement on the issue, he indicated that he would leave further dealings with the government to the church's African bishops. Kariuki was a Kikuyu, bishop of the area where much of the Kikuyu population lived, and brother-in-law to Kenyatta.

<sup>205</sup> *Daily Nation*. September 20, 1969.

<sup>206</sup> *East African Standard*. August 13, 1969.

<sup>207</sup> *East African Standard*, September 9, 1969; *Target*, September 1, 1969. The National Council of Churches of Kenya is an umbrella organization composed of a number of

and the government indirectly and by allusion, so as not to incur legal wrath.<sup>208</sup> Even so, the *Target* newspaper was accused by one KANU official of being “engaged in a campaign aimed at inflaming tribal feelings to such an extent as to pose a threat to peace and tranquility” and warned that such actions would not be tolerated by the ruling party.<sup>209</sup>

It was only after these instances that the churches’ top national leaders took official, public stands against oath-taking. Among the first churches to take official positions on oath-taking are two that are not among those highlighted in this dissertation, the Friends (Quakers) and the Nairobi Baptist Church. The Quakers were conducting their annual Yearly Meeting when reports of the oath-taking crisis were beginning to gain prominence in the news, and thus the church’s top officials penned a statement, unanimously agreed upon at the annual conference, urgently requesting the President to act against oath-taking and other threats to peace and unity in Kenya.<sup>210</sup> The press reported on this letter on September 5, 1969. During Sunday church service two days later, the Reverend of the

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protestant and independent churches in Kenya, including the Anglican, Presbyterian and (during the Kenyatta Presidency) Africa Inland Churches. In the September 1 issue of the organization’s *Target* newspaper, Henry Okullu, the magazine’s editor wrote a front-page article titled “Killing our Unity” (possibly an allusion to Mboya’s murder) with a photo of Christian communion, alluding to the conflict between the Christian sacrament and the Kikuyu oath-taking ceremony. Okullu was critical of the churches, including his own Anglican church, of not speaking up more forcefully. In the same issue, the Bishop of Nakuru, Australian missionary Neville Langford-Smith, published a bullet-point list laying out why oath-taking was unchristian. See also Sabar 2002: 84-85; Okullu, Henry. *Quest for Justice: An Autobiography of Bishop John Henry Okullu*. Shalom, 1997: 55.

<sup>208</sup> Sabar 2002: 84-85.

<sup>209</sup> *East African Standard*. September 3, 1969.

<sup>210</sup> *East African Standard*, September 5, 1969.

Nairobi Baptist Church (NBC), Tom Houston, preached a sermon opposing the oathing practice and then led over 200 members of his congregation in signing a covenant drafted by NBC opposing the practice. Nairobi Baptist Church, unlike the larger denominations, consisted of a single congregation, thus allowing quick action. In this case, Rev Houston's stand was the result of a visit from one of his church's members, who recounted how she had been forced to take the oath after experiencing beatings and threats made against her family.<sup>211</sup>

Among the five major Kenyan churches that are the focus of this dissertation, the first to respond were the Africa Inland Church and the Anglican Church. On September 8, just one day after the Nairobi Baptist Church took its stand, the Anglican Archbishop Beecher commented on oathing, calling the practice "repugnant and unacceptable" and beyond the citizenship duties that Christians should be expected to perform.<sup>212</sup> While giving his general opinion on the situation, he also explicitly deferred to the African bishops of the Church for further action, which took several forms. At Beecher's request, Bishop Obadiah Kariuki, in whose diocese the oathing was occurring, called together the Diocesan Synod, which later issued a statement condemning the oathing on grounds of being anti-Christian and because of coercion. On the same day as Archbishop Beecher's initial statement, the AIC released its own statement, offering full support for the NBC statement and threatening to hold demonstrations in Nairobi and elsewhere "to declare

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<sup>211</sup> Daystar University Research Center. *Celebrating the Unchanging God: The Story of Nairobi Baptist Church*. Thomas Press (India), Limited. 2008.

<sup>212</sup> *East African Standard*, Sept 9, 1969.



our supreme loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ and to protest against enforced taking of secret oaths.” The statement also denied that AIC President had taken the oath.<sup>213</sup>

On September 9, the Presbyterian Church’s administrative secretary, Bernard Muindi, strongly condemned the practice, especially due to Christians being forced to partake against their conscience and contrary to the law, and called upon the government to put a stop to it.<sup>214</sup> Reverend Muindi qualified his statement as representing his own views and not necessarily those of the Church, though his stance would be echoed in later church statements. The official PCEA statement would come one week later on September 15, after the church’s general administration committee met and listened to accounts from those who had been harassed over taking the oath. The PCEA statement strongly condemned oathing and called upon Kenya’s Parliament to reconvene to discuss the issue. The church also pledged action, including sending details of victims’ reports to the President and convening a day of prayer later in the month, during which the church would agree to a “covenant of unity.”<sup>215</sup>

The Catholic Church publicly entered the fray on September 11 with a pastoral letter, condemning oathing as “against human dignity and freedom.”<sup>216</sup> The bishops had previously stated that statement was “overdue” but that they were waiting for bishops who had not been able to attend the bishops meeting in person to read and approve of

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> *East African Standard*. September 10, 1969.

<sup>215</sup> *East African Standard*. Tuesday, Sept 16, 1969.

<sup>216</sup> *East African Standard*. September 12, 1969.

statement.<sup>217</sup> The letter was generally seen as weak compared to some of the other church statements. The Adventist Church provides an exception to the general church response, as it practiced its usual abstention from political affairs, speaking only to reaffirm its loyalty to God and to the government.<sup>218</sup>

The churches were joined in their efforts by the continued statements against oath-taking by KPU officials and condemnation of the practice by secular civil society actors, including ethnic associations and trade unions. The pressure was too much for the government. On Sept 19, Vice President Moi read a statement condemning the oath-taking and instructing the police to investigate the incidents and arrest those administering oaths by force.<sup>219</sup> The churches did not let up. On Sunday, September 21, Anglican Bishop Kariuki held a service attended by thousands in which his Mount Kenya Diocese, which covered the Kikuyu homeland of Central Province, presented a statement condemning the oath-taking and calling upon "the Government and its forces to uphold law and order and to restore the stability of [the] country."<sup>220</sup> The Presbyterian Church held a similar event of comparable scale the following Sunday at its historic Church of the Torch in Kikuyu town, with other events being held in various Presbyterian congregations.<sup>221</sup> The Presbyterian service collected money for a PCEA elder who had recently died from injuries inflicted upon him when he refused to take the oath. By early October, the

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<sup>217</sup> *East African Standard*. September 10, 1969.

<sup>218</sup> *East African Standard*. September 28, 1969.

<sup>219</sup> *East African Standard*. September 20, 1969.

<sup>220</sup> *East African Standard*. September 22, 1969. *Daily Nation*. September 22, 1969.

<sup>221</sup> *East African Standard*. September 29, 1969; *Daily Nation*. September 29, 1969.

government was ready to declare that oath-taking was no longer occurring in the country, ending the controversy over the practice.<sup>222</sup>

#### ***4.2 Explaining the Oath-taking Controversy: Preferences and Structure***

Though implemented for secular reasons, the oath-taking phenomenon represented the greatest single threat to the major churches in the Kenyatta era. It is clear that oath-taking offered no benefits to the major denominations and was a significant threat to the churches for a number of reasons. Most significantly, the phenomenon threatened to both detract from church membership and lower the faithfulness of remaining church members. Much of the on-the-ground resistance to oath-taking came from devout Christians who refused to take the oath because they viewed it as an affront to their beliefs. Christians had given similar resistance to the Mau Mau oath in the 1950s. The churches thus saw their members and lower-level officials being intimidated, brutally assaulted and in at least one case killed by the oath-enforcers.<sup>223</sup>

For the church leaders, letting the oaths go on would have continued the widespread victimization of their members. Furthermore, some Christians relented under the pressure and took the oath, causing crises of faith that affected their participation in their churches.<sup>224</sup> If allowed to continue, the Kikuyu loyalty oaths could have

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<sup>222</sup> *Daily Nation*. October 3, 1969.

<sup>223</sup> An elder of a Presbyterian church and his wife were beaten after refusing to participate in the oath, with the husband dying of his injuries. was beaten to death after refusing to participate in the oath. This death was front-page news in the country's two most prominent newspapers, and his funeral brought out thousands of mourners including the top leadership of the Presbyterian Church. *East African Standard*, September 22, 1969. *Daily Nation*, September 22, 1969.

<sup>224</sup> The woman who reported her experience to Nairobi Baptist Church pastor Tom Houston conveyed to the reverend that she felt "soiled and unclean" after having

discouraged many more church members from continuing to participate in their churches, which would also have downstream effects on the amount of offerings the churches could raise from their members. The oaths were intended to secure Kikuyu loyalty to the KANU government in the face of political opposition. They were thus very divisive, and this priming of ethnic animosity threatened to affect church members' ability to interact and worship together, as did the divisions between those who choose to participate in oathing and those who objected on moral grounds. This would represent a significant decrease in faithfulness of members, who were being primed and encouraged to adopt ethnic animosities that were at odds with the doctrines of love, unity and cooperation that were central to church doctrines.<sup>225</sup>

These divisive effects thus threatened a sharp decline in church attendance and membership. Oathing also potentially affected church leaders, specifically those who belonged to the Kikuyu and other groups. Public perception that church leaders had taken the oaths would have damaged the reputation of these leaders, as noted by AIC President Gichuha's firm denial that he had participated in an oathing ceremony.<sup>226</sup> As

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participated, and Houston had to arrange a "private cleansing Communion Service" for her in order to absolve her of the guilt she felt and reaffirm her religious commitment. Daystar University Research Center 2008: 56-57.

<sup>225</sup> These church concerns were identified in an editorial in the East African Standard newspaper: "Apart from its anti-Christian ethos, or possibly because of it, oath taking divides the takers from the non-takers, while other tribes who are uninvolved in the ritual react suspiciously. The administrators and the takers are removed socially, politically, tribally and, innately, spiritually from the repudiators. Ultimately they arrive at a confrontation which can split the people down the middle, to their lasting disadvantage. *East African Standard*. September 9, 1969.

<sup>226</sup> Not taking the oath could also damage church leaders' credibility among members who were in favor of oathing and ethnic solidarity; thus the existence of this practice created a dilemma for church leaders, who would likely lose credibility with some

stated in a later Presbyterian publication recounting the controversy “Some people did not see the evils of oathing, and the period was so critical that there could have been a schism had the church not acted so quickly and boldly.”<sup>227</sup>

Beyond these direct effects on church members willingness to remain with their churches and participate in church activities, oathing also called into question the supremacy of Christianity over other allegiances. The oath givers were implicitly enforcing a rival allegiance to Christianity with the tacit, if not active, support of the government. Church leaders therefore felt compelled to challenge what they saw as government endorsement of an unchristian practice that threatened to undermine Christian morals and Christian beliefs among those who agreed to participate, as well as threatening the safety and wellbeing of those who did not participate. The belief that the Kikuyu oathing was antithetical to Christianity was reflected in Reverend Okullu’s September 1 Target article, “Killing Our Unity,” which explicitly argues against oath-taking on scriptural grounds and implicitly portrays oathing as sacrilegious by including a picture and captioned description of a Christian communion service.

From the point of view of the government, oathing was initially a way of enforcing solidarity within the Kikuyu community. Specifically, it can be viewed as a way of forcibly instilling pro-government ideology within the ethnic bloc that the government considered its de facto minimum winning coalition. Looking toward a general election at the end of 1969 and facing political threats from a Luo community

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segment of their membership for either option (participating or objecting) available to them.

<sup>227</sup> Muita 2003: 76-77.

angry over Tom Mboya's murder and an opposition party within parliament, Kenyatta or his inner circle felt the need to secure their support base among the Kikuyu and their ethnic allies such as the Meru and Embu. There has been speculation that the government consulted with church leaders and obtained the latter's tacit approval before implementing the oath-taking plan, though this seems unlikely given the intensity of the church response.<sup>228</sup> In practice, the government either did not anticipate the unprecedented level of opposition that the churches would raise, or simply calculated that the loss of church support would be worth the benefits.<sup>229</sup> Despite the churches' efforts, which ultimately brought government action against oath-taking, the practice had already run its course among the Kikuyu population and the goal ethnic solidarity among the Kikuyu had already been reached.<sup>230</sup> Furthermore, the government likely anticipated that church leaders would seek to maintain friendly relations with the government apart from the churches' opposition to oath-taking, as in fact happened.

#### ***4.3 Ethnicity and the Churches' Response to Oath-taking***

Given the shared threat that oath-taking posed to the major Christian churches, the responses of all the denominations (except the Seventh-Day Adventist Church) were in many ways similar, though with some variation. The Anglican Church, Africa Inland

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<sup>228</sup> Murray-Brown, Jeremy. *Kenyatta*. New York: EP Dutton, 1973. Cited in Hornsby 2013: 211.

<sup>229</sup> Specifically, the gains in pro-government ideology that would result from oath-taking would outweigh the loss in church ideological support that would come along with promoting this practice.

<sup>230</sup> Lonsdale, John, Stanley Booth-Clibborn, and Andrew Hake. "The Emerging Pattern of Church and State Co-operation in Kenya." in *Christianity in independent Africa* (1978): 281; Hornsby 2013: 212.

Church and Presbyterian Church all responded within two days of the Nairobi Baptist Church sermon. The Catholic response, though “overdue”, came four days after the NBC sermon. The content of all the churches’ statements conformed to a common model. While generally pledging supreme allegiance to Jesus Christ, the statements all go out of their way to affirm church loyalty to President Kenyatta and/or the Government, or to make it clear that the church opposed extra-legal opposition to the Government. On the critical side, the churches statements were unified in opposing oathing on the grounds of coercion, and described the practice as unchristian and contrary to the country’s constitution.<sup>231</sup> None of the statements directly implicated President Kenyatta or the government for conducting the oathing.

Despite these similarities, there were differences in the churches responses that reflected the level of exposure they had to the oathing phenomenon. Because oathing primarily affected the Kikuyu community and related groups such as the Meru, Embu and Kamba, the churches that were mainly populated by members of these groups responded most forcefully. The Anglican, Presbyterian and AIC denominations all had significant numbers of GEMA members among their adherents (as well as Kamba in the case of the AIC, and these three churches had stronger reactions against oathing than the more diverse Catholic Church (see Table 2.2 above). Of these three, the two with Kikuyu majorities, the Anglican and Presbyterian churches, were the most exposed to oathing due to their Kikuyu majorities, and these two churches had the strongest responses against oathing.

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<sup>231</sup> Section 78(4) of the 1969 version of the Kenyan constitution stated “No person shall be compelled to take an oath which is contrary to his religion or belief or to take an oath in a manner which is contrary to his religion or belief.”

The relative strength of the churches' opposition to oathing can be examined through comparison of the content of the churches' statements and the actions they took subsequently. The Anglican, Presbyterian and AIC statements all made demands of the government. The Anglican and Africa Inland Churches both called on the government to act to protect citizens from forced oathing, while the Presbyterian Church requested Parliament reconvene to discuss the matter. The Anglican statements go slightly further in implying government involvement or complicity in the oathing, stating that such oaths could not "be required of us by the State" and stating that "that the Government should be pressed to accept a Christian's word or written assurance of his loyalty as sufficient", thus implying that the government was behind the oaths. The Catholic Church's statement, generally regarded as weak, made no demands on the government, simply including a vague call for Christians to pray for the country and its leaders.

In addition to looking at the words of the various churches, the intensity of their responses to the oathing crisis can be measured by the actions taken by the different denominations. Again, the Anglican and Presbyterian Churches, the two denominations which drew a majority of their members from the GEMA ethnic groups, had the strongest response, reflecting the level of threat that oathing posed to these two churches. Both the Anglicans and Presbyterians held massive anti-oathing events that drew thousands of people to attend.<sup>232</sup> Following the model set by the NBC service a few weeks earlier, each of these services included what amounted to a counter-oathing ceremony, in which the crowd approved of a statement authored by the respective church pledging loyalty to

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<sup>232</sup> Total attendance has been estimated at 50,000 for the Anglican ceremony and over 200,000 for the Presbyterian event. *East African Standard*. October 20, 2004.



God and the government while condemning the practice of forced oath-taking. The Africa Inland Church in its initial statement threatened to engage in mass action instead, but did not carry out such activities. The Catholic Church left its response at the statement issued on September 11, neither threatening nor carrying out any type of mass action.

As noted, the only comment from the Seventh-Day Adventist Church was a statement reaffirming its loyalty to the government. This is consistent with the church's apolitical stance during this era, largely a result of SDA doctrine. In addition to the Seventh-Day Adventist prohibition against becoming embroiled in political controversy, the churches' ethnic and regional makeup also discouraged taking action on the oath-taking crisis. The SDA Church had its base in the western area of the country among the Luo and Gusii, far away from the Kikuyu areas that were at the epicenter of the oath-taking phenomenon. The President of the SDA Church in Kenya was an American. This limited exposure to the oath-taking happening in the center of the country presented little reason for the SDA to supersede its principle of abstention from political action.

#### ***4.4 Church Structure and the Churches' Response to Oath-taking***

As stated earlier, the centralized structures of the churches facilitated cordial relationships with the government. Examining the churches campaign against oath-taking highlights the roles of both church structure and church preferences in influencing political action. While this organizational feature of the churches did not prevent them from speaking out against the oath-taking rituals, it did influence the timing of the churches response. As noted, the churches only spoke publicly about the oaths after the political opposition had done so, despite the fact that church members were the main victims of this practice and had informed their leaders of what was happening. Consistent with this

dissertation's arguments concerning church structure, the church leaders' first response to the oath-taking crisis was to privately take the issue to President Kenyatta, as they had done with other issues during the Kenyatta administration. Thus, we see the churches having multiple private meetings with Kenyatta over the issue. The two Kikuyu clergy who were national-level church leaders, Presbyterian Moderator Crispus Kiongo (accompanied by the number two official in the Presbyterian Church, General Secretary John Gatu, who was also a Kikuyu and politically active in this era) and Africa Inland Church President Andrew Wambari Gichuha, went in person to visit President Kenyatta. The Anglican and Catholic churches, both headed by expatriates at the time, delegated negotiations to high-ranking Kikuyu clergy within their ranks.<sup>233</sup> The various denominations' Kikuyu clergy could speak to President Kenyatta from a position of shared community. When the church's fight with the government over oath-taking became public, Anglican Archbishop Beecher was explicit in his public comments on oath-taking that he was leaving the further details of the Anglican Church's response to its African clergy. Future Catholic Archbishop Raphael Ndingi, who at the time was a Bishop of one of the areas being affected by the forced oath-taking, recalls that Archbishop McCarthy declined to directly confront President Kenyatta based on his friendship with the President.<sup>234</sup>

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<sup>233</sup> Githiga argues that "the expatriates were hesitant to be involved in post-independent political affairs once the nationals were in power as most of them had failed to speak out against the injustices practiced by the colonial government." Githiga, Gideon Gichuhi. *The Church as the Bulwark Against Authoritarianism: Development of Church and State Relations in Kenya with Particular Reference to the Years After Political Independence 1963-1992*. Regnum, 2001: 56

<sup>234</sup> Waihenya and Teresia 2009: 62.

It was only after the efforts at private mediation were tried several times and failed that the churches went public with their challenges to the government to stop the oaths. Even then, the church statements were careful to distance the President from the practice, despite the evidence that he was at least complicit in the oaths, and affirmed the churches' overall loyalty to the government, thus preserving as best they could the churches' friendly relationships with the Kenyatta government. The President also attempted to take advantage of the direct top-level contacts facilitated by church centralization. By the time of the Anglican and Presbyterian mass rallies against oath-taking, Kenyatta had returned from his extended stay on the Coast. He initially responded angrily to the church demonstrations, even challenging his brother-in-law, Anglican Bishop Kariuki, telling the bishop that "you should be the last person to undermine me."<sup>235</sup> Kenyatta also summoned the Moderator and General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church to meet with him, but after haranguing the church leaders, Kenyatta finally listened to their criticisms and pledged to stop the oath-taking.<sup>236</sup> Though placing a dent in church-state cooperation, the confrontation between the churches and the government over oath-taking did not prevent the churches from continuing generally cooperative relationships.

## **5 Church Political Orientations, 1970-1978: Divergence and Continuity**

### ***5.1 Major Events and Church-State Relations, 1970-1978***

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<sup>235</sup> Osaso, Millicent. *The Life and Times of Maurice Michael Cardinal Otunga, 1923-2003*. No. 176-178. AMECEA Gaba Publications, 2006.

<sup>236</sup> *East African Standard*. October 20, 2004.

As time went on, circumstances in Kenya and in the churches changed significantly, leading to more measured responses from the churches toward the government. President Kenyatta lost some of the prestige and popularity that he held when Kenya first gained independence. Prior to independence, KANU had largely been an endeavor of the Kikuyu and Luo ethnic groups. Odinga's defection and the government's suppression of his KPU opposition party, as well as the murder of Tom Mboya, were catalysts in a major split between these two communities, leading to Luo opposition to the government. Though this was the most notable example of a disaffected community, it was not the only one. Ethnic tensions, political rivalries and economic disparities eroded the national unity that had characterized the early years of the Kenyatta presidency. The government foiled a mutiny plan in 1971, and this event was used as an excuse to replace military officers from other ethnic groups, such as the Kamba, with Kikuyu.<sup>237</sup> Mboya's murder was followed by other mysterious deaths of political figures: C.M.G. Argwings-Kodhek (another Luo) in 1969 and Ronald Ngala (from the Giriama subgroup of the Mijikenda people, and the most prominent politician from the Coast Province) in 1972. Most of the political assassinations and mysterious deaths went by without church comment. Despite operating under de facto one party rule after the KPU's banning in 1969, Kenyatta still faced dissatisfaction amongst the population and dissent from within the ruling KANU party. These oppositional forces featured prominently in the 1974 election, the final general election of Kenyatta's presidency.

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<sup>237</sup> Branch 2011: 100.

During the 1974 campaign, even some of the church leaders voiced a level of discontent at the state of affairs in Kenyan politics. The national leadership of the churches had maintained their support for the government during the political clashes with the KPU (1966-1969) and during the uproar over Mboya's murder in 1969, only objecting to the Kikuyu oath-taking that followed Mboya's killing because these oaths negatively impacted Christians who refused to participate in these ceremonies. In the 1970s, relations between the church and government were more mixed, particularly for the Catholic and Anglican denominations. Ahead of the 1974 national elections, the Catholic bishops released a public letter condemning abuses in the voter registration process and criticizing MPs who were in office for selfish reasons and had not been attentive to their constituents' needs.<sup>238</sup> Anglican Archbishop Festo Olong, who had succeeded retiring Archbishop Beecher in 1970, addressed the upcoming 1974 election by warning African leaders to avoid greed, lest they suffer a similar fate to Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie, who had recently been deposed.<sup>239</sup> These criticisms did not directly name President Kenyatta, who would continue to be personally lauded in church leaders' remarks, but they represented a level of criticism not seen in the early days of the Kenyatta presidency.<sup>240</sup> The Catholic and Anglican comments reflected the attitude of the people as seen through the results of the vote; half of the incumbent MPs were voted out

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<sup>238</sup> *Target*, August 25, 1974.

<sup>239</sup> *Target* October 13, 1974.

<sup>240</sup> For example, in a pastoral letter released by the Catholic Church in 1973, the bishops thank Kenyatta for "the unique and outstanding role [he] played" in the political and economic success of the country during its first ten years of independence. "Independence and Peace: Pastoral Letter on the Occasion of the Tenth Anniversary of Independence, 12 December 1973."

of office, including four cabinet ministers, while several critics within the party won re-election.<sup>241</sup>

Kenyatta's government increasingly became known for its ethnic favoritism toward the Kikuyu over the other ethnic groups. Even within the Kikuyu community, tensions rose between those from Kenya's own Kiambu District, who were given most influential posts in Kenya's government and favored by his policies, and the Kikuyu from Nyeri and Muranga Districts.<sup>242</sup> In addition to geographical differences, the Kikuyu were also divided by class, with a few privileged members of the ethnic group becoming wealthy in land and money during Kenya's rule while a large underclass of landless or indebted Kikuyu grew dissatisfied with the government's policies.

Josiah Mwangi "J.M." Kariuki, a populist MP who led the unofficial opposition within KANU during the first half of the 1970s, actively appealed to the excluded Kikuyu along both regional and class lines, as he was from Nyeri and championed major land reform, and he also appealed to disaffected Kenyans of other ethnic groups.<sup>243</sup> Kariuki's popularity – he was seen for a time as the clear frontrunner to succeed Kenya – represented the widespread dissatisfaction that had developed to Kenya's policies, and the MP's murder brought protests and civil unrest.

By the time of J.M Kariuki's murder in 1975, the top leaders of some of the churches were willing to put limited distance between themselves and the government by

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<sup>241</sup> Ahluwalia, D. Pal S. *Post-colonialism and the Politics of Kenya*. Nova Publishers, 1996: 68; Hornsby 2013: 277.

<sup>242</sup> Horowitz, Donald L. *Ethnic groups in conflict*. University of California Press, 1985: 436.

<sup>243</sup> Hornsby 2013: 281.

supporting investigation into Kariuki's murder and explicitly endorsing the rights of citizens to protest over the death.<sup>244</sup> Thus, some churches, particularly the Catholic and Anglican churches, were more willing to offer criticisms in the 1970s than they had been in the 1960s. This change was notable but also moderate, as the church leaders still offered support to Kenyatta himself and offered no direct criticisms of the government. Nevertheless, what accounts for this divergence in church attitudes?

### ***5.2 Explaining Church Political Orientation Under President Kenyatta, 1970-1978***

In part, the adjustment of some of the churches' political attitudes, from uncritical support to more measured but still loyal stances, reflects the changing mood within the country. While the political controversies of the late 1960s were largely a dispute between the government and a specific community, the Luo from Nyanza Province in the far west of the country, by 1975 discontent had become widespread. By the time of Kariuki's murder, association with the government, especially in the midst of such political controversy, did not bring church leaders the same benefits from the population – reputation, increased church membership or increased donations – that being a friend of Kenyatta brought in earlier years.

In addition to the changing political climate of the country, which diminished the government's ability to supply legitimacy to the church leaders, another change had occurred within the leadership of the churches that decreased the church leaders' demand for external legitimation. By 1975, the national leadership of each of the major churches

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<sup>244</sup> *Target*, May 4, 1975.

had changed hands.<sup>245</sup> This turnover was exogenous to the political situation in Kenya. Catholic Archbishop McCarthy and Anglican Archbishop Beecher left office upon turning 75 and 65, respectively, the mandatory retirement ages within their denominations. The Presbyterian Church limits Moderators to a maximum of two terms of three years each, and all Moderators since independence have held their positions for six years. While the SDA does not have term limits, its leaders left Kenya for reasons unrelated to the situation within Kenya.<sup>246</sup> The story is less clear for the AIC, but missionary Erik Barnett recalls that Andrew Wambari Gichuha (who left office in 1971, four years before his death) retired from leadership in the AIC due to his age and failing health.<sup>247</sup>

While the retirements of the churches initial post-independence leaders were exogenous to Kenyan politics, the processes by which their replacements were chosen were mixed on this regard. In the international denominations, the Catholic and Seventh-Day Adventist Churches, leaders were chosen from above without much focus on local

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<sup>245</sup> Anglican Archbishop Beecher had retired in 1970, followed by Catholic Archbishop McCarthy and Africa Inland Church President/Bishop Andrew Wambari the following year. The leaderships of the Presbyterian Church had turned over twice, as Presbyterian Moderator Charles Kareri retired in 1967, and his successor Crispus Kiongo followed suite in 1973. The SDA had the most turnover in leadership; after M.E. Lind left Kenya in 1965, two Americans led the Church: F.G. Reid (1966-1970) and C.D. Henri (1970-1973).

<sup>246</sup> M.E. Lind and C.D. Henri were both promoted within the transnational hierarchy of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*. July 19, 1973. F.G. Lind, who had been appointed head of the SDA in Kenya after the intended officeholder was prevented from assuming the role because of visa issues, returned home to the United States after serving in Kenya.

<sup>247</sup> Interview by Paul Ericksen. Wheaton College. January 23 and 24, 1995; *Target* May 4, 1975.



politics. Maurice Otunga's seniority within the Catholic hierarchy made him a clear choice for Archbishop.<sup>248</sup> In the case of the SDA, its top Kenyan leaders remained expatriates who were mainly brought in to lead the Kenyan church from assignments elsewhere. Even the first African leader of the Kenyan SDA Church, D.K. Bazarra (who took office in 1973) came from neighboring Uganda, which was at the time administratively tied to Kenya.

Internal Kenyan politics appeared to play a greater role in the leadership selection process of the Anglican Church. The 1970 election of Festo Olang, a Luhya bishop who led the Maseno Diocese that encompassed western Kenya, over Obadiah Kariuki to the position of Archbishop of the Anglican Church has been viewed as a move by the Anglican Church to distance itself from Kenyatta. This election places view on the role of internal democracy in church politics. Unlike Leonard Beecher, who was appointed Archbishop of East Africa, in 1970 the selection for the Archbishop for Kenya was done through election, with the bishops and other representatives of the Anglican dioceses serving as electors. Though Kariuki was close to Kenyatta and Kikuyu made up a majority of Anglicans at the time, most of the Kikuyu were concentrated in one of the Church's dioceses, Mount Kenya.<sup>249</sup> Because the other dioceses had equal votes, the

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<sup>248</sup> Otunga was the first African in Kenya to become a bishop, and at the time of his appointment in 1957., he was the youngest Catholic bishop in the world at age 30. "African is a Bishop at 30" *Catholic Herald*. January 4, 1957.

<sup>249</sup> Statistics presented by Barrett place Kikuyu as over two-thirds of the total population of Anglicans in the country. Because ethnicity data is not provided for the Church's Nairobi diocese, this represents a lower bound on the total share of Kikuyu among the Church's membership. According to the Handbook, the Anglicans in Mount Kenya Diocese was 99.5% Kikuyu. The only other diocese with a clear Kikuyu majority was the Diocese of Nakuru, with 55% Kikuyu membership. This latter diocese was not led by a Kikuyu bishop, however; but by expatriate Bishop Neville Langford-Smith. Although

electorate was thus disproportionately outside of Kenyatta and Kariuki's power base, and by this time discontent within Kenya had risen against Kenyatta and his Kikuyu clique from the Luo, who along with the Luhya comprised most of the population of Olang's own Maseno diocese, and various other groups. The Presbyterian and AIC elections proceeded along ethnic lines. The former, with its base among the Kikuyu and related Embu and Meru ethnic groups (collectively known as GEMA) has since independence always chosen leaders from among this ethnic bloc. Likewise, the AIC is largely composed of the Kalenjin and Kamba ethnic groups, and after the retirement of AIC President Andrew Wambari (a Kikuyu) in 1971 and his succession by Wellington Mulwa (a Kamba), the leadership of the denomination has alternated between the Kamba and Kalenjin.

Unlike the situation in 1969, by 1975 all the major churches were under African leadership. All the national church leaders were Kenyan except for Seventh-Day Adventist President D.K. Bazarra (in office 1973-1985), who was from neighboring Uganda. Catholic Archbishop Maurice Otunga and Anglican Archbishop Festo Olang were both members of the Luhya, one of the main ethnic groups of Kenya hailing from Western Province. As such, they did not suffer from the stigma of colonialism that could have been employed against their predecessors. While Otunga was chosen by Rome, Olang was elected by the bishops and representatives of the clergy and laity within the Anglican Church. The new leaders who were in charge of the churches by 1975 had less incentives to associate with the government due to the increasing unpopularity of

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ethnic data is not given for the Diocese of Nairobi, this diocese was directly administered by the outgoing Archbishop Beecher, who apparently favored Olang over Kariuki. See also Sabar 2002: 165, Okullu 1997: 98-99.

Kenyatta's ruling clique and its policies, and the church leaders had less need to be legitimated as they were all African and did not have a stigma of participation in colonialism. Thus these leaders could afford to occasionally part ways with the government.

Nevertheless, it was only the Anglican and Catholic Churches that occasionally exercised this leeway for criticism. In these two churches, but not in the other denominations under study, changes had occurred within their internal structures that encouraged greater independence from the government. As noted above, the pro-government effects of top-level leadership centralization in the Anglican Church were mitigated by the autonomy of the Church's bishops within their individual dioceses. Initially, this worked in Kenyatta's favor as long as the number of bishops was small and Kenyatta's brother-in-law occupied a key bishopric. By the time of J.M. Kariuki's murder in 1975, the number of Anglican dioceses had expanded due to the 1970 division of the Maseno Diocese in western Kenya into two dioceses that more or less covered the Luhya-dominated Western Province (Maseno North Diocese) and the Luo homeland of Nyanza Province (Maseno South Diocese). The Anglican leadership selection procedures were democratic, with bishops elected within their individual dioceses. In 1975, the Luo Anglicans of Maseno South elected as their new bishop Reverend Henry Okullu, who had been a relatively outspoken voice of criticism from within the church's lower ranks. Just a few months after J.M. Kariuki's death, the prominent Mount Kenya Diocese would also be split into two. While Kenyatta's relative, bishop Obadiah Kariuki, retained his leadership position in Mount Kenya South Diocese (headquartered in Kiambu), the new Mount Kenya East Diocese elected Reverend David Gitari, another

outspoken Anglican who had preached a series of critical radio sermons about J.M.'s murder and had been chastised by the government for doing so.<sup>250</sup> The election of these particular bishops was endogenous to Kenyan politics, as their elections can be seen as rewards for their earlier critical stances, the structures that allowed them to advance in the Anglican hierarchy were exogenous to Kenyan politics, having been in place prior to the contentious political atmosphere in which they operated. The Anglican Church, with its autonomous administrative divisions and internal democracy, filtered up popular discontent against the government and contributed to church independence from the government.

The Catholic Church underwent an exogenously determined alteration in leadership structure that also lessened the pro-government tendencies of the Church. Kenyan independence coincided with the worldwide Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council, popularly known as "Vatican II," which lasted from 1962 until 1965. One of these reforms was the creation of national "Episcopal Conferences" that gathered all of a country's bishops together into a body that deliberated on and decided the national churches' stances on relevant social and political issues. These conferences did not replace the formal hierarchical structure of Catholic leadership, but created a parallel structure with greater internal democracy. The Episcopal Conferences were headed by a President elected for a set term from among the countries' bishops by those bishops themselves, and the decisions of a conference were to be made by two-thirds majority.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>250</sup> Sabar 2002: 164.

<sup>251</sup> Pope Paul VI. "Christus Dominus: Decree Concerning the Pastoral Office of Bishops in the Church. Christus Dominus." October 28, 1965.

The Kenyan Episcopal Conference (KEC) was inaugurated in 1969 with Archbishop McCarthy serving as its first President; Archbishop's McCarthy and then Otunga would head the KEC from 1969-1976. Though the top leadership of this new structure initially coincided with the leadership of the traditional church structure, the democratic nature of the KEC brought about greater autonomy from government cooptation, as evidenced by the bishops' letter ahead of the 1974 election. As contended in Argument 4, the changes in the internal leadership and decision-making structures of the Anglican and Catholic churches interacted with political factors within Kenya, such as declining government popularity, to bring about relatively critical stances from these two denominations. The other denominations largely maintained their centralized leadership structures. The Presbyterian Moderator, AIC Bishop and SDA Executive Director remained the top national leaders of their respective denominations. These leaders did not venture to criticize the Kenyatta government, even at the height of the government's unpopularity.

### ***5.3 Structure, Preferences and Limited Divergence of Church Political Orientations***

The distinction between these denominations and the Catholic and Anglican churches, in terms of both structure and political orientation, should not be overstated. Even the churches that did criticize only did so mildly. Despite the various structural features of the Catholic and Anglican churches highlighted above, each of these denomination still had a single national head who could negotiate with the government on behalf of their church and who be held accountable for falling too far out of line with the government. The two Archbishops of the later Kenyatta years, Otunga and Olang, employed private negotiation as the preferred method of the church heads. Archbishop Otunga had an early experience dealing with Kenyatta when his Archdiocese became

involved in a land dispute with a group of local politicians. Kenyatta personally stepped in to settle the dispute, holding a meeting with Otunga and the others involved and ending the dispute in favor of the Church.<sup>252</sup> After the murder of J.M. Kariuki, Cardinal Otunga's response was to meet privately with Jomo Kenyatta and urge the President to work toward reconciliation.<sup>253</sup> Anglican Archbishop Olang employed a similar strategy in his relationship with government. As he says in his autobiography:

During my years as Archbishop I did not find relationships with government or international figures difficult. My approach, if there is a matter in dispute, has always been to try to meet the person concerned privately, look for common ground and, if necessary, seek mutual forgiveness. By doing this one can avoid open conflict and show that if there is any hostility it is not on the side of the church. Of course there are issues on which one cannot compromise, but these principles should be self-evident.<sup>254</sup>

Other factors also ensured that none of the churches strayed too far from their friendly relationships with the state. Government officials still benefited the churches financially through their appearances at harambees. Several important officials within Kenyatta's inner circles had important ties to the churches. Kenyatta himself belonged to the Presbyterian Church. The First Lady, "Mama" Ngina Kenyatta, was a Catholic whose brother was a priest and the Catholic chaplain the University of Nairobi.<sup>255</sup> Vice-President Moi was a committed member of the Africa Inland Church, and Charles Njonjo, the Attorney General throughout Kenyatta's presidency, was a dedicated member

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<sup>252</sup> Osaso 2006:147-148.

<sup>253</sup> Ibid: 149-150.

<sup>254</sup> Olang, Festo. *Festo Olang': An autobiography*. (1991): 56.

<sup>255</sup> Throup, D. "Render to Caesar the Things that are Caesar's." in Hansen, Holger Bernt, and Michael Twaddle, eds. *Religion & politics in East Africa: the period since independence*. James Currey Publishers, 1995.

of the Anglican Church. These and other officials within the government made numerous appearances at fundraising events for their own denominations and other churches as well.<sup>256</sup> Consistent with Argument 4, the continued benefits of government-endorsed fundraising for the Catholic and Anglican churches mitigated the effects of the government's declining popularity and church structural changes, such that these denominations only became mildly more critical of the government in these later years. Fundraising became even more important for the Presbyterian Church, which in the 1970s followed suggestions coming out of the World Council of Churches to implement a moratorium on foreign missionaries and funding. The resulting Presbyterian policy, called Jitegemea in Swahili, led to an increased reliance on harambees to fund church operations and projects.<sup>257</sup> The Africa Inland Church also took on greater local responsibilities; in 1971 the church formally became independent from the Africa Inland Mission that had founded the denomination in Kenya. The government immediately helped with fundraising; Vice-President Moi, the guest of honor at the church's independence celebration, helped to raise 65,900 Kenya shillings for the church at the event.<sup>258</sup> The government and the churches still benefited from cooperation in social service provision and development work, such as the church relief efforts in the state-

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<sup>256</sup> Examples of such appearances in the final years of Kenyatta's presidency include President Kenyatta appearing on behalf of the Presbyterian church at Thogoto (*Target* November 5, 1977); Charles Njonjo at Ngoru Catholic Church in Nyeri (*Target* January 16-29, 1977); Daniel arap Moi at Kansabet Catholic Church (*Target* January 26, 1975).

<sup>257</sup> The term Jitegemea translates into "a movement toward self-reliance." Benedetto and McKim 2009: 254; Muita 2003.

<sup>258</sup> *Target* November 1971.

neglected northern regions of Kenya following severe droughts in 1970-1971.<sup>259</sup> In this and various other efforts around the country, the government sponsored church efforts and the churches provided its own workers and resources from both local and international sources.

As noted, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church differed from the others. Due to its principles against political involvement, the SDA stayed silent on political issues, even during the later years of the Kenyatta government. In addition to the church's belief system, which avoided political comment and limited cooperation with the government, the church's leadership remained expatriate, even if though it passed from European to American and ultimately to African hands with the choice of D. K. Bazarra of Uganda as Executive Director in 1973. Like the Catholic Church, the SDA is transnational in character, with each national church a branch of the worldwide organization headquartered in Silver Spring, Maryland. Although leadership was centralized, leaders were chosen by the SDA administration abroad and answerable to the church hierarchy outside of Kenya. SDA leaders could, and did, gain promotion within this transnational structure.<sup>260</sup> These options for advancement lessened the incentive to forge close ties with the Kenyatta government, as leaders' future prospects lay outside of the social and political structure of Kenya.

At the same time, SDA leaders had incentives not to antagonize the government. The government during Kenyatta's time banned certain religious groups including the

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<sup>259</sup> Lonsdale and Hake 1978.

<sup>260</sup> For example, the SDA President at independence, Rev. M.E. Lind of Norway, left the Kenyan branch of the church in 1965 to take a prominent position in the international administrative structure of the SDA. See *Outlook: General Church Paper of the Trans-Africa Division of Seventh-Day Adventists*. April 15, 1965.



Jehovah's Witnesses, another denomination that eschews participation in political life.<sup>261</sup>

The SDA may not have escaped government censure. SDA documents imply that an official selected to head the SDA in Kenya was prevented by the Kenyan government from entering the country, possibly due to his association with Rhodesia, forcing the international SDA leadership to find a replacement.<sup>262</sup> While the SDA's centralized leadership likely played a role in its quiet acquiescence to government policies – if for no other reason than the fact that centralization provided a clear target for government reprisals if the church had become critical – ideational factors and international administrative structure likely had large effects on the SDA as well. Thus, SDA political silence is over-determined, but is consistent with the arguments made in this dissertation.

The above discussion focuses on the general political orientation of the various Kenyan churches over time, using the churches' reactions to specific events as means by which this orientation can be measured. In so doing, it shows that the general orientation of the churches remained supportive of the government, with mild variation accounted for by divergence in the internal organization of the different denominations. This divergence was limited, however, by the limited nature of structural change within the

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<sup>261</sup> *Target* May 30, 1973.

<sup>262</sup> Nyaundi recounts that “around 1968”, the government threatened to deregister the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Kenya because the Kenyan branch was administered as part of the SDA's Trans-Africa Division based in Rhodesia, which was considered a racist regime. (208). In 1965, Pieter H. Coetzee, an official in the Trans-Africa Division, was chosen to replace M.E. Lind as head the Kenyan Seventh-Day Adventist Church. *Adventist Review and Sabbath Herald*. September 9, 1965. Later that year, an SDA publication announced that Coetzee would be unable to take the position, as he was “unable to return to Kenya due to passport difficulties,” and that F.G. Reid had been chosen to head the Kenyan SDA church in his place. *Trans-Africa Division Outlook*. December 15, 1965. Though not definitive, it stands to reason that Coetzee was denied entry into Kenya due to his connection to Rhodesia.

more “critical” denominations and by sustained compatibility of the churches’ preferences and the government’s preferences surrounding fundraising and service provision.

## **6 Conclusion**

This chapter has examined the political orientation of several large denominations and the nature of church-state relations in Kenya during the rule of founding Kenyan President Jomo Kenyatta, 1963-1978. The primary feature of church political stances during this period was general uniformity in the nature of the churches’ stances, which were cooperative and supportive of the government, with slight divergence over time between the slightly critical Catholic and Anglican churches and the other, more supportive and acquiescent Protestant denominations. Consistent with the arguments presented in the opening chapter, this chapter demonstrated how the interests of the church and state generally aligned in terms of providing mutual support for one another. Initially, the government had alternative sources of legitimacy and was therefore only willing to “purchase” church support cheaply, while the churches and particularly the church leaders had strong demand for government legitimation. The relative need for ideological support shifted over time as the government became less popular and the churches gained legitimacy through indigenization of their leadership. Parallel to considerations of ideological support, however, the churches and the state had consistently aligning incentives to cooperate in providing social services and conducting development work within Kenya, encouraging a level of cooperation throughout the Kenyatta era even as political considerations shifted.

This chapter also demonstrates the necessity of examining church structure in addition to church preferences. The similarly centralized nature of church leadership across denominations contributed significantly to the supportive stances of the churches by allowing them to negotiate directly and credibly with President Kenyatta and his top officials. This method of top-level negotiation, facilitated by centralized leadership, generally neutralized other factors such as ethnicity that may have otherwise caused a divergence in church positions. Even though political considerations and turnover in church leadership influenced the incentives for continued church-state cooperation, only the Catholic and Anglican churches noticeably altered their stances. These alterations are inadequately explained by the changing political climate or by factors such as ethnicity that are generally thought by others to have been decisive. Rather, it is only by examining these other factors in relation to changing organizational structures that these shifts in some church stances but not others make sense. Those churches that ventured into mild criticism of the government were the ones in which internal structures increased the number of individuals who were involved in setting church policy or who could publicly make their voices and opinions heard without being constrained by the rules or bureaucracy of their denomination.

This chapter also examined the two major instances of church-state conflict that arose under President Kenyatta, involving the Catholic Church objecting to educational reforms in 1968 and the major denominations (except for the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which represents a special case for theological and historical reasons) launching a strong opposition to government-condoned compulsory Kikuyu oath-taking ceremonies in 1969. These examples show both the applicability and the limits of explaining church

political activities through church structure. While centralized leadership did not ultimately prevent the churches from adopting oppositional stances, it did delay these decisions until after the churches had exhausted attempts by church leaders and their representatives to address their concerns through private, direct negotiations with President Kenyatta and his aides. Examining the churches' political activities in this chapter may give the impression that church-state cooperation is the norm and that deviations from this relationship are rare. However, the next chapter will demonstrate the extent to which, after Kenyatta's death, the altered priorities of the new government of President Daniel arap Moi and the continued divergence in internal church organization would result in much greater diversity in church political orientation vis-à-vis the national government, highlighting in particular the degree to which internal church structure can influence church political activity.

### **Chapter 3: Church Political Activity During the Moi Years: 1978-2002**

#### **1 Introduction**

Looking at Christian churches as politically active civil society organizations, Kenya presents an empirical puzzle that defies both the conventional wisdom presented by scholars of Kenyan politics and the broader theoretical literature on how churches operate as political and economic actors. Kenya's founding President, Jomo Kenyatta (in office 1963-1978), had nominally remained a Christian in his adult years, but he showed little interest in practicing Christianity, rarely attended church, and engaged in polygamy, a practice that the Catholic and Mainstream Protestant churches consistently condemned.<sup>263</sup> Nevertheless, Kenyatta maintained good relations with all the major Christian denominations, which generally remained silent or supportive of Kenyatta as the President consolidated political power around a small ruling clique who marginalized or eliminated political rivals.

Upon Kenyatta's death, his Vice-President, Daniel arap Moi, became Kenya's second President (1978-2002). Moi was a devout Christian who attended church weekly and was a prominent member of a conservative mission-founded denomination, the Africa Inland Church (AIC). As Vice-President, he had often attended harambees (fundraisers) and other important functions for his own AIC and various other denominations. It was therefore expected that his presidency would feature even closer collaborations between the churches and the President. But as Moi consolidated power through repression, cronyism and ethnic manipulations, the relationships between the government and the various churches were much more varied than it had been under

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<sup>263</sup> Hornsby, Charles. *Kenya: A History Since Independence*. IB Tauris, 2013:202, 259.

Kenyatta. Some churches, such as the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and Moi's own Africa Inland Church, were very supportive and loyal to the President, even in the midst of severe political strife and economic hardship. However, several of the larger Christian denominations, most notably the Anglican and Catholic churches, presented sustained opposition to Moi that went far beyond any objections that the churches had expressed toward Kenyatta.

Many scholars have attributed the varied stances of the churches to ethnic considerations.<sup>264</sup> Moi assumed the presidency over the objections of members of Kenyatta's "Kiambu mafia" who sought to keep power in Kikuyu hands, and the new President eventually consolidated power around the office of the President and increased the influence of his own Kalenjin group. Scholars have therefore equated the opposition of some of the churches with an ethnic backlash, but a close examination of the ethnic composition of the churches' membership and leadership does not support the ethnic conflict thesis advanced in these works.

Others have pointed to religious and theological issues, arguing that the more "conservative" denominations, including Moi's Africa Inland Church, supported the President as a matter of moral imperative, while more "liberal" or "activist" churches

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<sup>264</sup> Mutahi Ngunyi, for example, cites ethnic considerations and political patronage as the main determinants of Kenyan churches' political stance during the Kenyatta and Moi presidencies, although the author acknowledges other factors as well. Ngunyi, Mutahi G. "Religious Institutions and Political Liberalisation in Kenya." in Gibbon, Peter, ed. *Markets, Civil Society and Democracy in Kenya*. Nordic Africa Institute, 1995: 174. Similarly, Gifford argues that "a large number [of churches] supported Moi either from ethnic or patrimonial-clientelist considerations or out of a theological conviction that political involvement was not the role of churches." Gifford, Paul. *Christianity, Politics and Public life in Kenya*. Hurst & Co., 2009: 41.

took up the roles of critics.<sup>265</sup> Ngunyi, for instance, argues that Catholic and Anglican Churches, the two denominations that were most critical of the Moi government, were more socially permissive than other denominations in Kenya.<sup>266</sup> However, the distinction between conservative and liberal churches is often made based on the churches' political positions, creating a circular argument for the relationship between conservatism and political support for the incumbent regime.<sup>267</sup> Furthermore, despite the assertions by authors like Ngunyi concerning the relative liberalness of the activist churches, these denominations have consistently exhibited conservative political positions as well, sometimes agreeing with President Moi and at times even placing themselves to the right of the government.<sup>268</sup> The main evidence linking theological conservatism with support

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<sup>265</sup> John Lonsdale uses the "liberal" and "conservative" designations to describe the churches that opposed and supported President Moi, respectively, while also arguing that theological justifications served to reinforce ethnic political divides. Lonsdale, John. "Kikuyu Christianities: A history of intimate diversity." *Studies on Religion in Africa*. 23 (2002): 157-198.

<sup>266</sup> Specifically, Ngunyi argues that the Anglican Church, due to the autonomy it gives to individual dioceses, accommodates a spectrum of conservative and liberal social stances, while the Catholic Church in his estimation is more accepting of members engaging in activities such as "smoking cigarettes, drinking cheap alcohol, wife-beating and moderate use of prostitution – all of which constitute important dimensions of the lifestyle of the poor in Kenya" (138).

<sup>267</sup> For instance, Sabar casually uses the terminology of "conservative" and "liberal" to describe those churches that supported or opposed the Moi government, respectively Sabar, Galia. *Church, state, and society in Kenya: from mediation to opposition, 1963-1993*. Psychology Press, 2002: 189.

<sup>268</sup> Even during the initial period of cordial relations between President Moi and the Catholic Church, the latter took the government to task over the government's liberal family planning policies. Crary, David. "Catholic Church, Kenya At Odds Over Soaring Population" *Associated Press*. August 12, 1985. Sabar (2002) describes the Anglican Church in Kenya, which eventually became a mild critic of the Kenyatta government and a strong opponent of President Moi, as initially hesitant to criticize Kenyatta due to the Church's "conservative theological tradition" (72). Anglican Archbishop Manasses Kuria

for President Moi has been the rhetoric of the supportive churches themselves, as they cite scriptures, such as Romans 13, as justification for their political stands.<sup>269</sup> The “liberal” churches, however, similarly ground their stances in biblical references and theological concerns.<sup>270</sup>

I argue instead that the main differences between those churches that supported the government and those that opposed it were structural rather than theological. The churches that supported President Moi were, by and large, those with certain organizational features, including centralized and unaccountable leadership, which made it easier for the government to coopt them (see Argument 1b and Argument 3 of Chapter 1). While it could be argued that conservative theology is an omitted variable, determining both church structure and church political support, the evidence more strongly supports a story of cooptation. Rather than offering support to Moi independent of any particular inducements or pressure from the government, as would be the case if

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took issue with Anglican churches of other countries at the international Lambeth Conference for addressing safe sex outside of marriage as a method of preventing HIV transmission. Longley, Clifford and Gledhill, Ruth. “Clash on homosexuals' rights; Lambeth Conference” *The Times (London)*. August 5, 1988. Archbishop Kuria also took issue with bishops at the Lambeth Conference for accepting polygamy within the Church, a stance that placed Kuria in agreement with President Moi. Mkubwa, Margaret Lunyolo. “Kenya: Reheated Debate Over Polygamy.” *IPS-Inter Press Service*. August 19, 1988.

<sup>269</sup> Romans 13:1-2 states: “Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished.” (New International Version).

<sup>270</sup> To give just one example, the Catholic Bishops, in a 1993 open letter to President Moi published in the *Daily Nation* newspaper, justify their criticisms of the government by citing the example of the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel and the admonition given to him by God to “warn the wicked from his wicked ways in order to save his life” (Ezekiel 3:18). “An Open Letter to H.E. the President Daniel Arap Moi and to All the People of Goodwill in Kenya: Message of the Kenya Catholic Bishops” October 30, 1993.



the supportive churches were driven primarily by theological dictates, the backing of the supportive churches was clearly connected to patronage for the churches and their leaders. Through qualitative analysis, this chapter identifies the specific effects of church structure as distinct from the effects of ideology, arguing that the former are independently important for understanding the churches' positions toward President Moi.

While churches with certain structural features, such as leadership centralization and lack of accountability mechanisms, are more likely to end up supporting their national governments, these structural factors are permissive rather than determinative. Ultimately, church political stances are based on the preferences of church leaders and are influenced by the actions of governments insofar as policies directly or indirectly affect the churches. Centralization and authoritarianism within certain churches allow for more streamlined negotiations with the government (Argument 1a) and also makes these churches more attractive targets of government cooptation (Argument 1b), but these mechanisms do not guarantee church support. Negotiations between church and state may fail due to incompatible preferences or unwillingness of the government to engage in discussions. Similarly, if a government does not find the support of a particular church worth the effort it would have to expend or the cost it would have to pay to achieve this support, the government will not devote time and resources to maintaining that church's support.

In the following three sections, I discuss in depth the major statements and actions of the five major Kenyan Christian denominations under study during the years 1978-2002. Following Anglican Bishop Gideon Githiga's analysis of the roles played by the

churches under President Moi, I divide these years into three periods.<sup>271</sup> Section 2 covers the First Nyayo Era, to use Bishop Githiga's terminology, which refers to the beginning of Moi's presidency, 1978-1985.<sup>272</sup> This period is marked by general cooperation between the churches and the state, as the former adopted largely pro-government political orientations. The primary exception to this cordial relationship is the Anglican Church, which began this period with a friendly attitude toward the new government, but went on to have several conflicts with the government during these years. Section 3 analyzes the Second Nyayo Era, 1985-1991, which contained a split in the churches' relationships with the government. As economic and political conditions deteriorated within Kenya, the Anglican Church stepped up its criticisms and opposition to the government, followed by a later but similar stance by the Catholic Church and eventually the Presbyterian Church, though the latter was more ambivalent in its stance toward the government. The churches did not present a united front, however, as the Seventh-Day Adventist Church and especially Moi's own denomination, the Africa Inland Church, remained supportive of the government. Section 4 looks at the Multi-Party Democracy Era, 1992-2002, during which opposition parties were legally allowed to compete for power in Kenya. During this era, several churches adopted partisan stances to various degrees. Section 5 concludes the chapter.

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<sup>271</sup> Githiga, Gideon Gichuhi. *The Church as the Bulwark Against Authoritarianism: Development of Church and State Relations in Kenya with Particular Reference to the Years After Political Independence 1963-1992*. Regnum, 2001.

<sup>272</sup> Nyayo, a Swahili word meaning "footsteps," was the primary slogan of the Moi government, just as Harambee ("let's pull together") had been for President Jomo Kenyatta's government.

Finally, a note about the content of the following chapter is in order. As stated previously, the dependent variable for this dissertation is the political orientation of the national level denominations of the churches, as reflected by the words and actions of national church leadership. This does not include the political orientations of regional or subordinate church actors, except insofar as the words and actions of these lower-level actors reflect the orientations of the national leadership. Nonetheless, the following discussion will spend significant time detailing the political comments and actions of a handful of regional and local church leaders, particularly Anglican Bishops David Gitari, Henry Okullu and Alexander Muge, and Presbyterian Reverend Timothy Njoya. These four clerics were the most prominent church voices criticizing the government, with their statements often making headlines in Kenyan press and drawing reactions from the government. Discussing church-state interactions during this period without looking at these four church leaders would therefore be difficult. In addition, the national leaderships of the Anglican and Presbyterian churches often had to react to the statements of these individuals, and some indication of the national church leaders' political stances can be inferred from the actions or inactions taken in response to lower level clergy's statements. Thus, while reading the following accounts, view the details concerning these four clerics in the context of how their statements and actions affect and reflect the political orientations of their respective churches' national leaders.

## **2 The First Nyayo Era, 1978-1985: General Church-State Cooperation, Anglican Criticism**

### ***2.1 Cordial Church-State Relations Before the 1982 Coup Attempt***

When founding President Jomo Kenyatta died in 1978, power transferred to his Vice-President, Daniel arap Moi. Though Moi's ascendance followed legal procedures, his assumption of the country's top position was controversial. President Kenyatta had surrounded himself with officials from his Kikuyu ethnic group, often dubbed the "Kiambu Mafia" after the district from which they hailed. This clique held key positions in both the government and in GEMA, the Gikuyu (Kikuyu) Embu and Meru Association. Members of this group wanted to keep power in their hands, and tried to amend the constitution to prevent Moi, a member of the smaller Kalenjin group, from automatically assuming the presidency upon Kenyatta's death. GEMA's efforts were blocked by Moi's allies, most notably Attorney General Charles Njonjo, a Kiambu Kikuyu who chose to side with Moi against the Kiambu clique.<sup>273</sup> With the GEMA efforts blocked and the backing of allies in Kenyatta's cabinet such as Njonjo and Mwai Kibaki (also a Kikuyu, hailing from Nyeri), Moi took power in 1978 without legal complication.

As Kenyatta's motto had been Harambee ("Let's Pull Together"), Moi branded his presidency with Nyayo, the Swahili word for "footsteps." Initially, he portrayed this as a pledge to follow in the footsteps of Jomo Kenyatta, while also implementing popular

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<sup>273</sup> Njonjo declared that speculation about Kenyatta's death was illegal under Kenyan law, effectively silencing the group seeking to change the succession law. Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair*, 1963-2011. Yale University Press, 2011: 135.

changes such as releasing political prisoners and declaring a fight against corruption.<sup>274</sup> After holding parliamentary elections in 1979, Moi's new government seemed to promote inclusiveness when it expanded the number of assistant ministers in the cabinet in order to include politicians from every district in Kenya.<sup>275</sup> Later, however, it became apparent that Moi really expected Kenya to follow his own footsteps, and Moi was quick to sanction those who did not. Even in the early years of his presidency, Moi used authoritarian tactics to silence critics, including shuttering the University of Nairobi (a hotbed of student activism), detaining critics, and banning former Vice-President Odinga from running in both the 1979 parliamentary election and a later parliamentary by-election.<sup>276</sup> Moi forced the country's ethnic associations, including GEMA, to cease operations.<sup>277</sup> When Odinga threatened in 1982 to form a new opposition party, Moi had Attorney General Njonjo (whom he had retained from Kenyatta's cabinet) rush through legislation that banned parties other than KANU, legally solidifying Kenya's status as a one-party state.<sup>278</sup>

The change in leadership of the country coincided with changes in the leadership of several of the major churches in Kenya, as detailed in Table 3.1. Anglican Archbishop Festo Olang reached the mandatory retirement age of for his church and was rather

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<sup>274</sup> Hornsby 2013: 333; Branch 2011:138.

<sup>275</sup> Hornsby 2013: 344.

<sup>276</sup> Branch 2011: 149-152; Hornsby 2013: 340.

<sup>277</sup> Hornsby 2013: 353.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid.: 375.

unceremoniously pushed out of his position.<sup>279</sup> He was replaced as Archbishop by Manasses Kuria, a Kikuyu cleric who was at the time of his 1980 election Bishop of Nakuru.<sup>280</sup> Kuria's election was controversial within the church. The election took an ethnic tone, with tensions between supporters of the Kikuyu cleric Kuria and his rival for the position, Bishop Henry Okullu of the Luo ethnic group (the same ethnic group to which Odinga belonged).<sup>281</sup> In addition, Attorney General Charles Njonjo, a devoted Anglican, is thought to have manipulated the results in favor of Kuria.<sup>282</sup> Regardless of the actual degree of manipulation involved in his selection, Kuria was thus seen as the government's choice. The Presbyterian Moderator, Jeremiah Gitau, retired in 1979, having reached his two-term limit within the church, and was succeeded by the Reverend John Gatu. Reverend Gatu had long served as the Church's first African Secretary General (the number two spot within the church), during which time he spearheaded the church's initiative of Jitegemea or "self-reliance."<sup>283</sup> Gatu would serve as Moderator for two terms, 1979-1985. In Moi's Africa Inland Church, Bishop Wellington Mulwa died

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<sup>279</sup> Okullu, Henry. *Quest for Justice: An Autobiography of Bishop John Henry Okullu*. Shalom, 1997: 100.

<sup>280</sup> Archbishops within the Anglican Church are elected, with three electors from each diocese, including the diocesan bishop.

<sup>281</sup> Musalia, Martha Wangari. *Archbishop Manasses Kuria: A Biography: Strong in the Storms*. WordAlive Publishers, 2001: 67-68.

<sup>282</sup> There are conflicting reports of how much involvement Njonjo had in defeating or dissuading other candidates.

<sup>283</sup> Practically speaking, this initiative was a move away from relying on foreign funding for Church activities. See Muita, Isaiah Wahome. *Hewn from the Quarry: Presbyterian Church of East Africa 100 Years and Beyond*. Presbyterian Church of East Africa, 2003: 161.

suddenly in 1979. The man elected to replace him, Ezekiel Birech, was not only a Kalenjin like Moi, but was also the President's in-law.<sup>284</sup>

The two international denominations, coincidentally, both enjoyed more continuity in leadership from the late Kenyatta era to the early Moi years. The Seventh-Day Adventist Executive Director, D.K. Bazarra from neighboring Uganda, had been in office for several years when Moi came to power and remained so for most of the first Nyayo era. Bazarra would be succeeded in 1985 by Frederick Wangai, the first Kenyan to head the SDA in Kenya.<sup>285</sup> The Catholic Church leadership remained stable under Cardinal Maurice Otunga, the Archbishop of Nairobi, who would not retire until 1997. Parallel to Otunga's leadership, the chairmanship of the Kenya Episcopal Conference (the collection of all the country's Catholic bishops who met periodically and voted on Catholic Church policy on political and social issues) was held by bishops John Njenga (Bishop of Eldoret) and Raphael Ndingi (bishop of Nakuru) from 1976-1982 and 1982-1988, respectively.<sup>286</sup> Table 3.2 shows the chairs of the KEC during Moi's presidency.

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<sup>284</sup> Githiga 2001: 92

<sup>285</sup> "General Conference Committee." November 7, 1985, 10:00 a.m. Seventh-Day Adventist Office of Archives, Statistics and Records. Online Archives. <http://documents.adventistarchives.org/Minutes/GCC/GCC1985-11.pdf>. Accessed September 17, 2014.

<sup>286</sup> Njenga and Ndingi had been leading figures in the Catholic Churches opposition to education reform and oath-taking, respectively. See Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

<b>Table 3.1: Anglican and Protestant Church Leaders During Moi Presidency</b>				
Church Name	Highest National Church Office	Officeholder	Term	Ethnic Group/ Nationality
Anglican	Archbishop of Nairobi	Festo Olang	1970-1980	Luhya
		Manasses Kuria	1980-1996	GEMA
		David Gitari	1998-2003	GEMA
Presbyterian	Moderator	Jeremiah Kiongo Gitau	1973-1979	GEMA
		John Gachongo Gatu	1979-1985	GEMA
		George Ernest Wanjau	1985-1991	GEMA
		Bernard M'Mukindia Muindi	1991-1997	GEMA
		Jesse Macharia Kamau	1997-2003	GEMA
Africa Inland Church	Bishop/Presiding Bishop	Wellington Mulwa	1971-1979	Kamba
		Ezekiel Kiprop Birech	1980-1996	Kalenjin
		Titus Musili Kivunzi	1996-2001	Kamba <sup>&gt;1</sup>
		Silas Yego	2001-	Kalenjin
Seventh-Day Adventist	Executive Director	D.K. Bazarra	1973-1985	Ugandan
		Frederick Wangai	1986-1988	GEMA
		Joseph N Kyale <sup>287</sup>	1988-1995	Kamba? <sup>1</sup>
		Johnson Othoo	1995-2000	Luo? <sup>1</sup>
		Musyoka Paul Muasya	2000-	Kamba

<sup>1</sup> Dr Kivunzi comes from the Ukambani area. Nzengu, Musembi. "New constitution too costly for Kenya, Moi" The Star. February 28, 2011. Furthermore, Kivunzi's surname matches Kamba naming patterns, as does Joseph Kyale's, while Johnson Othoo's surname is consistent with the Luo ethnic group.

<sup>287</sup> After Frederick Wangai's departure, a retired former head of the SDA Church in Kenya, C. Dunbar Henri, briefly served as interim Executive director. Reverend Joseph Kyale was chosen on October 17, 1988 to become the new head of the SDA Church in Kenya. *Adventist Review*. 16, 1988; November 10, 1988.



<b>Table 3.2: Kenya Episcopal Conference Chairman During Moi Presidency</b>			
Name	Term	Diocese	Ethnic Group/ Nationality
John Njenga	1976-1982	Eldoret	GEMA
Raphael S. Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki	1982-1988	Nakuru	Kamba
Nicodemus Kirima	1988-1991	Nyeri	GEMA
Zacchaeus Okoth	1991-1997	Kisumu	Luo
John Njue	1997-2003	Embu/Nyeri	GEMA
Cornelius Kipng'eno Arap Korir	2003-2006	Eldoret	Kalenjin
John Njue	2006	Nyeri/Nairobi	GEMA

Despite the early signs of authoritarianism demonstrated by President Moi's government, the church leaders initially enjoyed a "honeymoon period" of friendly relations with the new president, and Moi actively worked to maintain this cordiality. Catholic Bishop Njenga, who was at the time also chairman of the Catholic Church's Kenya Episcopal Conference (KEC), included in his 1978 Jamhuri (Independence) Day sermon a call for Kenyans to pray for President Moi, telling the congregation present that the country should be grateful to have "a God-fearing President."<sup>288</sup> After the 1979 meeting of the Presbyterian Church's triennial General Assembly, the Church's resulting statement to its members included commendation for President Moi's recent extension of free education in Kenya.<sup>289</sup> When Moi held an inter-denominational service later that year to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Kenyatta's death, Bishop Wellington Mulwa of Moi's Africa Inland Church delivered the sermon, in which the AIC head

<sup>288</sup> *Target*, December 10-December 23, 1978.

<sup>289</sup> Muita 2003: 191.

praised both Kenyatta and Moi, the latter for tackling corruption, and pledged loyalty to Moi and the government.<sup>290</sup> A pastoral letter released by the Catholic Church ahead of the 1979 elections praised Moi for promoting “love, peace and understanding” and for respecting human rights.<sup>291</sup> The Presbyterian letter about the upcoming elections was somewhat more circumspect, urging non-partisanship among clergy, but it also gave members permission to join a political party of their choosing (while not mentioning that KANU was still the only party in operation).<sup>292</sup> In 1981, Anglican Archbishop Manasses Kuria led a delegation of the Church’s bishops to meet Moi in State House. At this function, the President guaranteed the government’s continued prioritization of religious education in school, and the Archbishop pledged the Anglican Church’s support in preaching the government’s Nyayo philosophy.<sup>293</sup>

### ***2.1.1 Church Support, 1978-1982: Church Structure, Negotiation and Cooptation***

Ngũgĩ has argued that Moi came into office with the view that “the Kenyatta clients from the mainstream churches were part of the coalition he had to disband in order to settle on the presidency.”<sup>294</sup> According to this argument, Moi purposely shifted away from patronizing the larger churches and moved toward newer churches, evangelical churches and churches rooted in his own ethnic group. Though this strategy eventually

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<sup>290</sup> *Target*, August 26-September 8, 1979.

<sup>291</sup> The Church’s comment served as an allusion to Moi’s own interpretation of Nyayo as consisting of “love, peace and unity.” *Target*, July 15-July 28, 1979.

<sup>292</sup> *Target*, November 4-November 17, 1979.

<sup>293</sup> *Daily Nation*. January 22, 1981.

<sup>294</sup> Ngũgĩ 1995: 121-177.p150-151.

came into being, it was not Moi's initial approach. Unlike Kenyatta, who remained friendly with the churches but did not particularly seek their participation in public life, Moi actively courted church support, and he initially looked to the main churches in Kenya for this support. These denominations held an increasing share of the Kenyan population during the Moi years (see Table 3.3), and there was thus much value in gaining their support.

As noted in Chapter 1, churches can provide three services to governments: ideological support, citizen mobilization, and social service provision. Moi initially sought all three of these church "products." Whereas Kenyatta had assumed the presidency with a great deal of prestige and political stature, Moi lacked such popularity and standing. Moi had essentially served as an unassuming Kenyatta loyalist who was not a potential rival to the Mzee, and the new president had come to power without the legitimizing effects of a popular election. Furthermore, Moi's Kalenjin ethnic group lacked unity and political influence, whereas the churches represented large, organized and motivated segments of the population that could be mobilized for political purposes, including the 1979 election.<sup>295</sup> The churches also remained major forces in development and social service provision. For all of these reasons, President Moi sought to employ the churches as important components of his political base.

Despite President Moi's Christian credentials, his desire to maintain church support was threatened by the fact that, other than his own Africa Inland Church, the major denominations were largely comprised of ethnic groups he was actively attempting

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<sup>295</sup> The seven sub-groups that make up the Kalenjin were not classified as a single ethnic group ("tribe") until 1979 (Hornsby 2013: 23).

to demobilize or diminish politically. With shared Christian identity insufficient to overcome the ethnic-based political tensions between the government and the communities from which the churches drew their membership, Moi courted the major denominations through financial benefits to their organizations and leaders. During Kenyatta's time in office, the President had only casually sought the churches' public support through informal and ad hoc appearances by himself and his cabinet ministers at

<b>Table 3.3: Church Size, 1980-2000<sup>1</sup></b>						
Church Name	1980		1990		2000	
	Adherents	% Total Pop.	Adherents	% Total Pop.	Adherents	% Total Pop.
Catholic	3,194,000	19.2%	5,050,000	21.4%	6,800,000	22.6%
Anglican	909,900	5.5%	1,450,000	6.2%	2,700,000	9.0%
Africa Inland	1,000,000 <sup>2</sup>	6.0%	2,000,000	8.5%	2,100,000	7.0%
Presbyterian	200,000 <sup>3</sup>	1.2%	1,000,000	4.2%	1,600,000	5.3%
Seventh-Day Adventist	242,385 <sup>4</sup>	1.4%	439,562 <sup>5</sup>	1.9%	700,000	2.3%

<sup>11</sup> Data drawn from: Johnstone, Patrick, Robyn Johnstone, and Jason Mandryk. *Operation World. 21st century edition*. Carlisle. Waynesboro, GA: Paternoster (2001).

<sup>2</sup>1982 data.

<sup>3</sup>1978 data.

<sup>4</sup>1979 data.

<sup>5</sup>1988 data.

harambees and other church events. As Vice-President, Moi had often attended these events on behalf of Kenyatta.<sup>296</sup> As President, Moi intensified the government's efforts to raise money for the churches. In early 1979, Moi appeared at a large harambee for the Anglican Church's Mount Kenya South Diocese. The fundraiser was the most successful

<sup>296</sup> In addition to appearing at special events, Moi was a regular church-goer, making weekly Sunday appearances at congregations of his own Africa Inland Church and other denominations.

ever in Kenya, raising nearly 1.5 million shillings for the diocese's development programs. This record was broken several months later when Vice-President Kibaki appeared at a fundraiser for the same diocese and raised 1.8 million shillings; Njonjo would raise over 1.3 million at a similar event for the Anglican Mount Kenya East diocese. In 1981, President Moi, along with Kibaki and Njonjo, helped the Presbyterian Church raise nearly 6 million shillings at a single event. Even accounting for the inflation that plagued the Kenyan economy in the 1970s and 1980s, these were very significant sums of money; the Presbyterian haul brought in more than half of the entire amount that the Church sought to raise during its entire fundraising campaign.<sup>297</sup>

Moi even courted the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, which was famously reticent to engage in politics and remained all but silent during the Kenyatta years. In early 1979, Moi hosted a Seventh-Day Adventist delegation that included one of the international Vice-Presidents of the Church, as well as the Executive Director of the Kenyan SDA, D.K. Bazarra. The visit between Moi and the Adventists was prominently featured in Kenya media.<sup>298</sup> During this meeting, Moi offered the church several hundred acres of land upon which to build the University of East Africa, Baraton. Like Kenyatta, Moi would use his power over land allocation to enrich himself and his loyal supporters and to gain new allies as well.

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<sup>297</sup> By using harambees, Moi was able to offer these significant financial benefits to churches without the government or the politicians themselves having to fully fund these financial gifts. For example, during the 1979 harambee for the Anglican Mount Kenya East Diocese, the government officials (Charles Njonjo, the guest of honor, as well as Moi and Kibaki) together donated about ten percent of the 1.3 million raised at the event. *Target*, July 15-28, 1979.

<sup>298</sup> *Adventist Review*. January 18, 1979.

As noted in the previous chapter, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church is distinct among the major churches in its extensive set of doctrines governing all aspects of life, including emphases on personal holiness and abstention from contentious politics. Because of these beliefs, the Adventist Church had not factored into politics during Kenyatta's era. Moi was able to gain this church's support, not solely by providing for its material needs, but also by appealing to the church's doctrine and beliefs. In the initial meeting with SDA leaders in 1979, Moi made a point of emphasizing his respect for religious freedom. This reassurance was especially important for a church such as the SDA, which has come into conflict with various national governments over practices such as strict adherence to the Saturday Sabbath, which can limit SDA members' ability to participate in political and civic life. Perceiving a high potential for conflict and persecution in its relations with governments, the Church holds religious freedom to be both practically useful and biblically mandated.<sup>299</sup> Adventist doctrine promotes healthy living, including abstention from alcohol and tobacco, and Moi was a well-known teetotaler and non-smoker.<sup>300</sup> The President supported the International Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism and Drug Dependency (ICPA), an officially non-sectarian NGO founded by Adventists to promote abstinence from drugs and alcohol. Kenya hosted this group in 1982, with President Moi addressing the delegates and commending their work.<sup>301</sup>

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<sup>299</sup> See, for example: Tyner, Mitchell A. "Church and State Separation: Why Do We Still Fight For It? Part Two" *Adventist Review*. November 10, 1988.

<sup>300</sup> *Adventist Review*. November 29, 1979

<sup>301</sup> *Adventist Review* November 11, 1982.

Moi put significant effort and resources behind cultivating church support for himself and his government. Raising money for church development projects and facilitating the creating of an Adventist university in Kenya represented continued cooperation between church and state in social service provision and development work, as had occurred during the previous administration.<sup>302</sup> Additionally, however, these material benefits provided by the government made church leaders more inclined to offer support.<sup>303</sup> Beyond simply making appearances with church officials and receiving favorable public statements from the different denominations, Moi sought more formal ties with the churches. He sought to define a philosophy around his Nyayo slogan, basing his ideas on the Christian principles of love, peace and unity.<sup>304</sup> In 1982 the President commissioning the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK, an umbrella organization of Protestant denominations including the Anglican, Presbyterian and AIC denominations) to expound upon these principles, which they did in a book published the following year entitled *A Christian View of Politics in Kenya: Love, Peace and Unity*.<sup>305</sup> By the time that the book was published, however, the political situation had changed due to a day of violence that rocked Moi and put Kenya on a path of greater repression.

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<sup>302</sup> Early in the new administration, Vice-President Kibaki recommended that the government and the NCCCK create a coordinating committee to coordinate the development work being done by the churches and by the state in order to avoid duplication of efforts (*Target* July 15-28, 1979).

<sup>303</sup> A front-page article in the church magazine *Target*, published directly under the news report on the 1981 Presbyterian fundraiser, noting that the churches had abandoned the role of “official opposition” in response to the benefits brought by the Moi government.

<sup>304</sup> Sabar 2002: 185.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*

## ***2.2 The August 1982 Coup and Its Aftermath***

Two months after amending the constitution to effectively ban organized political opposition, Moi faced the greatest challenge of his early years as president in the form of an attempted coup. Disgruntled airmen from the Kenya Air Force seized key positions within Nairobi in the early morning of August 1, 1982, announcing on Kenyan radio that President Moi was no longer in power. The majority of the military remained loyal to the government and defeated the rebel airmen in a matter of hours, but the coup attempt cost more than two hundred lives, as well as millions of shillings of property damage resulting from both the fighting and opportunistic looting.<sup>306</sup>

In the aftermath of the coup, the government punished those directly or indirectly implicated, including convicting half of the air force of being involved in the attempted overthrow, shutting down two major universities in the country where students had supported the coup and looted during the events of August 1, and jailing individuals accused of involvement. This last group included Raila Odinga, son of the former Vice-President (and future Prime Minister).<sup>307</sup>

The failed coup also factored into the downfall of Charles Njonjo, who had been one of the President's most important allies. Resigning from his post as Attorney General in 1980 and successfully launching a political career of his own, Njonjo was developing into a potential rival to Moi and thus became dispensable.<sup>308</sup> Through innuendo and rumor, Njonjo was increasingly portrayed as a source of subversion, and the former

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<sup>306</sup> Branch 2011: 154-157.

<sup>307</sup> Hornsby 2013: 379.

<sup>308</sup> Ibid: 350-352.



Attorney General was eventually publicly accused of a litany of offenses, including involvement in the 1982 coup. By the time Moi pardoned Njonjo (possibly to avoid a trial that would expose information embarrassing to the government), Njonjo had been pushed out of government and his political career ruined.<sup>309</sup>

Reprisals did not stop with these individuals. The attempt to violently overthrow Moi made a deep impression and inspired even greater levels of repression in Kenya, as detentions and torture became widespread practices for dealing with dissent. A separate set of human rights abuses occurred during this time period in peripheral areas of Kenya, particularly in the North East Province, which remained dangerous due to the flow of people and weapons across the border with Somalia and inter-clan rivalries between the ethnic-Somali population. The government's efforts to police the region led to various abuses by security forces, the most notorious of which occurred in Wagalla in February 1984, when an effort to disarm rival clans devolved into a massacre by Kenyan security forces that left several hundreds dead.<sup>310</sup>

### ***2.2.1 Church Response to Government Post-Coup, 1982-1985***

During these post-coup years of the First Nyayo Era, the national leaders of the churches mostly stayed quiet when it came to political affairs, with some variation. As was the pattern during the later Kenyatta years, the Anglican and Catholic Churches voiced moderate criticisms of specific issues during the early part of Moi's presidency,

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<sup>309</sup> Ibid: 389-390.

<sup>310</sup> Kenya's Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) details the Wagalla massacre, as well as similar events in places such as Bulla Karatasi (1980) and Lotirir (1984). Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission, *Report of the Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission: Volume IIA*. 2013.

but these denominations also remained silent or supportive on other issues. The Anglican Church was the first church to develop a contentious relationship with the government. As early as 1980, it had developed a “reputation of the most controversial religious organization in Kenya” due to its political statements.<sup>311</sup>

While this chapter focuses on the national leadership of the churches, the strongest opposition from the Anglican Church initiated with several of the subordinate diocesan bishops. Although the Archbishop is the official head of the Anglican Church, the Church’s structure makes him more of a first among equals by granting the other bishops considerable autonomy within their dioceses. During the Moi years, three of these bishops were especially vocal. David Gitari, a Kikuyu bishop of the GEMA-heavy Mt. Kenya East Diocese, had been one of the relatively few vocal critics of President Kenyatta, as the church used the little known cleric to publicly voice its opinions over the murder of J.M. Kariuki in 1975.<sup>312</sup> Gitari became a bishop that same year. Henry Okullu hailed from the Luo group in the western part of Kenya and headed the Maseno South Diocese in that area of the country. Okullu was regarded as one of the main representatives of Luo interests in the country, particularly as former Vice-President Oginga Odinga became excluded from the political process. Another early critic of government, Okullu published works on the relationship between church and state.<sup>313</sup> He had been a strong candidate for Anglican Archbishop in 1979, but the government seems

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<sup>311</sup> Sabar 2002: 181.

<sup>312</sup> Sabar 2002: 163-4.

<sup>313</sup> Among his most notable publications is the book *Church and politics in East Africa*. Uzima Publishing House, 1974.

to have considered him too radical, and Attorney General Charles Njonjo worked to have the more moderate Kuria elected instead. Alexander Muge was elected Bishop of Eldoret in 1983. Though the Bishop was a fellow Kalenjin to President Moi, he and the President belonged to rival sub-clans, the Nandi and the Tugen respectively, and Muge came into conflict with members of Moi's Africa Inland Church. These three bishops began to criticize the KANU government on a number of issues in the early years of the Moi presidency.<sup>314</sup> All three bishops would challenge the government over its widespread detention of political opponents after the 1982 coup attempt.<sup>315</sup> These criticisms echoed human rights complaints that were being made about Kenya from outside the country but were effectively forbidden from discourse within the country.

Archbishop Manasses Kuria was not as radical as his fellow bishops, and mostly stayed out of the political spotlight for the first few years of Moi's time in office. The Archbishop's response to the 1982 coup attempt and aftermath was mixed; Kuria encouraged the country's churches to help restore peace and order, but also objected to the government's wide-scale detentions and arrests.<sup>316</sup> The Archbishop's relationship with the government took a more significant turn in 1983, which many political observers attributed to Kuria's relationship with Charles Njonjo. Kuria earned the government's ire when he took the politically charged move of holding prayers for his ousted ally Njonjo, though this activity was not presented as an official Anglican Church statement about

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<sup>314</sup> Okullu, for example, indirectly compared the Kenyan government to the apartheid-era government in South Africa, as noted in Sabar 2002 (180).

<sup>315</sup> Sabar 2002: 183.

<sup>316</sup> Ibid.

Njonjo's situation.<sup>317</sup> Kuria's contentious relationship with the government continued in December 1983 when he used the twentieth anniversary of Kenyan independence to question whether the country was really free given the human rights situation in the country. Though Kuria later claimed that his words were misquoted, he coupled this clarification with an assertion of his right as a Kenyan citizen to speak on political matters.<sup>318</sup>

In these early years, the bishops' criticisms were of specific government policies, rather than the more general condemnations they would later offer. Even during this time of criticism, there was cooperation between the Anglican Church and KANU. For instance, when Moi approached the churches to help him flesh out his Nyayo slogan, which he was claiming to be based on the principles of Peace, Love and Unity, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) responded with its book *A Christian View of Politics in Kenya*. The NCCCK, at the time led by Anglican Bishop Gitari as its chairman and Presbyterian cleric John C. Kamau as its Secretary General, expounded upon the Nyayo principles identified by President Moi while also reserving the role of the churches in holding the state accountable. Though critical of various aspects of the political situation in the country, the book's explicit purpose is "to assist, to guide, and to encourage the President, so that he can fulfill his duty of being a good imitator of Christ."<sup>319</sup>

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> *Weekly Review*. December 9, 1983.

<sup>319</sup> National Christian Council of Kenya. *A Christian View of Politics in Kenya: Love, Peace, and Unity*. Uzima Press, 1983: Preface. Quoted in Sabar (2002): 185.

The Catholic Church was mostly quiet during this initial period. The Church issued a response to the 1982 attempted coup, in which the bishops went out of their way to display loyalty and a positive attitude toward President Moi. The letter thanks God for saving Moi and the country from the coup.<sup>320</sup> It then proceeds to thank President Moi himself for a number of things he had done, beginning with “the good he has done in support of religion and religious teaching in attending church services, fundraising meetings, etc.” before mentioning “the accomplishments of Kenya in the fields of education, health and economic development.” It further cites Romans 13:1-2, one of the Bible’s strongest assertions of the duty to obey secular authorities.<sup>321</sup> While the letter goes on to offer criticisms of corruption, inequality and other ills, these criticisms are targeted toward society and not directed toward the ruling party or the President; the latter is praised throughout as working against these social problems.

At the same time, the Catholic Church did offer some criticisms of the government, but these were tangential to the main political issues of the day. For instance, in 1984 Cardinal Maurice Otunga got into a dispute with the government, and particularly with Vice-President Mwai Kibaki, over coercive family planning policies implemented by the government, but this did not spiral into any larger confrontation between the Church and the state.<sup>322</sup> Nonetheless, the Catholic Church was generally held

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<sup>320</sup> Mejia, Rodrigo. Ed., *The Conscience of Society, the Social Teaching of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya 1960-1995*.

<sup>321</sup> The passage, as it is reproduced in the Pastoral Letter, reads: "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. Therefore he who resists the authorities, resists what God had appointed and those who resist will incur judgement [sic]."

<sup>322</sup> Crary 1985.

up by the government as a model of how the churches should approach political matters circumspectly. This perception would not change until about 1990.

Much of the literature on Kenya during the Moi period presents the Presbyterian Church as a major critic of the Moi regime, but this characterization is somewhat misplaced. Though the Presbyterian Church would eventually join in some of the critiques being offered by their Anglican and Catholic counterparts, for the most part the Presbyterian hierarchy kept a low profile when it came to political affairs. For most of the 1980s, the Presbyterian Church's reputation for opposing the government largely came from a single cleric, the Reverend Timothy Njoya. Though Njoya was the pastor of St Andrew's in Nairobi, the most prominent Presbyterian congregation in the country, he was only a local pastor and not part of the national Presbyterian hierarchy. Njoya emerged as an early, consistent and fierce critic of the KANU government headed by President Moi, but the reverend did not speak for the denomination when he delivered his several biting sermons. On the contrary, the Presbyterian Church sought to maintain good relations with the government during this early period. In 1984, when the government objected to a sermon by Njoya that urged listeners to pray for Charles Njonjo, the Presbyterian Church leadership issued an apology to the government and initiated procedures within the Church to discipline Njoya.<sup>323</sup> In 1985, the President was a guest of honor at the Presbyterian Church's triennial General Assembly meeting.<sup>324</sup>

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<sup>323</sup> *Weekly Review* 3 March 1987.

<sup>324</sup> Muita 2003: 194

The relationship between the President and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church remained good during these years. In 1984, the President and various aides attended a large Adventist service of over ten thousand people that was being personally conducted by the Kenyan SDA Executive Director, D.K. Bazarra.<sup>325</sup> By 1985, the Kenyan SDA Church had grown into the largest church union (the title for the SDA Church's administrative divisions) in the world.<sup>326</sup> While the government of Kenya may not have been directly responsible for this impressive church growth, the SDA's growth in Kenya gave this Church reason to be pleased with the religious atmosphere Moi maintained in the country. President Moi's own Africa Inland Church also continued to support the President, as it would do throughout his presidency.

### ***2.2.2. Divergences of Internal Church Structures and Church Political Orientations***

As identified in the previous chapter, the Catholic and Anglican Churches underwent changes in their internal organizational structure that increased internal democracy or accountability, while the Presbyterian Church, Africa Inland Church and Seventh-Day Adventist Church maintained their centralized and authoritarian leadership structures. This divergence of structure, which I argue explained the divergence in political opinions between the churches during the latter part of the Kenyatta era, also played a role in determining church stances during the first Nyayo era. The government attempted to manipulate the structure of the Anglican Church by influencing the Archbishop election in 1980. Initially, the new Archbishop Kuria was friendly toward the government, as shown by the Archbishop's pledge of support during his visit to Moi in

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<sup>325</sup> *Adventist Review* July 4 1985.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*

1981.<sup>327</sup> However, these efforts to install pro-government leadership within the Anglican Church were thrown off course by President Moi's fallout with Charles Njonjo (who had been Kuria's supporter and the most prominent Anglican in the government). Moi's strategy of coopting the Anglican Church was further undermined by the autonomous nature of Anglican dioceses, several of which had already elected leaders like Bishops Gitari and Okullu who were willing to criticize the government and were beyond the national church leadership's ability to censure. Bishop Muge's election in Moi's home area furthered this trend.

The Catholic Church is organized according to a similar "episcopal" structure as the Anglican Church, with Bishops leading dioceses throughout the country. The Catholic hierarchy does not allow as much autonomy for individual bishops as is practiced within the Anglican Church; the Catholic Archbishop of Nairobi was more clearly the leader of his denomination than his Anglican counterpart. Nevertheless, authority within the Church was divided to some extent by the existence of the Kenya Episcopal Conference, which elected a chairman from among the country's bishops to be the Church's leader and spokesman concerning social and political issues. This moderate degree of decentralization within the Catholic Church coincided with moderate independence from the state; the Catholic Church was neither as oppositional as the Anglican Church nor as supportive of the government as the leaders of the other main denominations.

In contrast to the Anglican and Catholic structures, the Presbyterian, AIC and SDA denominations each concentrated ultimate national leadership authority in a single

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<sup>327</sup> *Daily Nation*. January 22, 1981.



individual, which had several effects that facilitated friendly church-state relations. Centralization streamlined discussion and negotiation between the church and the government (Argument 1a of Chapter 1). John Gatu, Presbyterian Moderator from 1979 to 1985, has been noted as a church leader who “sought to preserve reasonable relations with the government” during his time in office.<sup>328</sup> Reverend Gatu recounts that under Moi, the Church “had a way of meeting [the political] leadership and telling them what was going on,” and he reportedly saw the government as responsive to church needs.<sup>329</sup> The churches’ centralized leadership also allowed Moi to target church leaders for personal benefits (Argument 2a). AIC Bishop Ezekiel Birech, as Moi’s religious leader and in-law, was able to take advantage of his relationship with the President. One missionary recounts that when the AIC needed to quickly raise \$5,000 extra towards creating a new missionary college, Bishop Birech responded that he had a “friend” who wanted to donate; the Bishop would soon show up with a \$10,000 check bearing Moi’s signature.<sup>330</sup> The benefits were not always directly monetary; for example, when Moi attended the large SDA service in 1984, the President’s entourage praised SDA head Bazarra’s preached message as “the sermon of the year.”<sup>331</sup>

Thus, in the First Nyayo Era, the churches’ attitudes toward the government ranged from the moderate criticism of the Anglican Church to support from the SDA

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<sup>328</sup> Throup, David, and Charles Hornsby. *Multi-party Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta & Moi States & the Triumph of the System in the 1992 Election*. J. Currey, 1998: 303.

<sup>329</sup> Gatu, John. Interview by author. 21 December 2009; *Daily Nation* April 9, 2006.

<sup>330</sup> Anderson, Richard JD. *We Felt like Grasshoppers: The Story of Africa Inland Mission*. Crossway Books, 1994: 327-328.

<sup>331</sup> *Adventist Review* July 4 1985.

church and especially from the Africa Inland Church. The orientations of the Catholic and Presbyterian Churches rested in the middle, with the former ambivalent concerning the government and the latter neutral if not mildly supportive, given the strong reaction of the Presbyterian hierarchy to the harsh words of one of its pastors. Even the harshest church criticism during this period focused more on specific issues rather than offering general opposition to the state or the KANU government. For instance, none of the churches objected to Kenya officially becoming a one-party state in 1982, and their subsequent complaints were initially over abuses of the system rather than the fundamental deficiencies of Moi's authoritarian system itself. This latter critique would not come for several years, after (some of) the churches experienced a more fundamental break with the government. This break would occur when Moi's authoritarian policies directly impacted the churches.

### **3 The Second Nyayo Era (1986-1991)**

To the extent that the churches varied in their stances, the differences in their political orientations began to manifest during the First Nyayo Era, but it was not until the Second Nyayo Era that the churches would fully adopt the positions they would keep throughout the rest of Moi's presidency. This second era was marked by deteriorating political, economic and social conditions, fostering unrest and dissent among the population and increasing repression by government forces. Church leaders were among the few individuals exempt from the worst government repression, and thus clergy were among the harshest critics of the government. The political orientation of the churches diverged during this period, with some denominations responding more strongly to the

conditions within Kenya, and others remaining loyal to the government.

### ***3.1 Queuing System Controversy and the Election: 1986-1988***

The repression that had marked Moi's rule intensified even more in 1986. Though the government had rounded up and punished most of the individuals responsible for the 1982 coup, as well as those merely suspected of involvement, a few coup plotters remained free and founded an underground movement called Mwakenya ("Union of Nationalists to Liberate Kenya").<sup>332</sup> This group proved ineffective in striking against the state, but it provided a convenient justification for President Moi to further expand the use of widespread detention and torture against perceived dissidents, beginning in 1986.<sup>333</sup> The perceived threat of Mwakenya even provided Moi with political cover in the eyes of his church critics; Bishop David Gitari, for instance, spoke against the secret group in 1986.<sup>334</sup>

Meanwhile, the first significant controversy to draw negative reactions from several of the churches arose, involving elections. Now that Kenya was officially a one-party state, primary elections within KANU largely determined who would hold political office. In 1985, KANU revised the process by which party elections would be held. Instead of secret ballots, voters were required to physically stand in a queue behind their preferred candidate. The government claimed that this process made the election process less costly, but it was obvious that this was a system for voter intimidation and

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<sup>332</sup> Branch 2011: 162.

<sup>333</sup> Ibid:163-166.

<sup>334</sup> Sabar 2002: 236.

exclusion.<sup>335</sup> In 1986, it was announced that this new “queuing” system would be employed in all KANU elections.

### ***3.1.1 Church Responses to Queuing***

The churches came out very strongly against this process. The Anglican Church and the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) moved first. KANU’s 1986 announcement of the new voting system corresponded with a church convention being held by the NCCCK, allowing the umbrella church body to quickly respond with a statement written by Anglican Bishop David Gitari against the queuing system.<sup>336</sup> The clergy argued that the system put them in an intolerable bind: if church leaders participated in the public system, it could cause severe divisions within their congregations, but not being able to participate would be tantamount to denial of ‘their human and constitutional rights’ to participate in the political process.<sup>337</sup> Several other Anglican bishops condemned the change, including moderate Bishops Njuguna and Mahiani (both representing GEMA-dominated dioceses).<sup>338</sup> Archbishop Kuria, usually moderate when compared to some of the other bishops, had particularly strong words against the new system, labeling it “ ‘un-Christian, undemocratic and embarrassing.’ ”<sup>339</sup>

Though the Anglican Church and its allies spoke first, it was the Catholic Church that spoke more comprehensively. In November 1986, the Catholics released their first

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<sup>335</sup> Hornsby 2013: 399-400, 408-409.

<sup>336</sup> Sabar 2002: 196.

<sup>337</sup> *Weekly Review* 29 August 1986.

<sup>338</sup> Sabar 2002: 196

<sup>339</sup> *Weekly Review* 29 August 1986; 5 September 1986.

critical letter of the Moi administration, an Open Memorandum to the President.<sup>340</sup> In some of the harshest language of that letter, the Catholic Bishops make the accusation against KANU that “the party is assuming a totalitarian role”, though they mainly blame the problem on misplaced zeal by some within the party. The letter is very clear in separating the President, who is praised, from the party and politicians, who are criticized. Substantively, the letter objects to the queuing system in KANU primaries, even while acknowledging the government’s promised exemption of clergy from the system. It also questions the government’s tactic of changing the country’s constitution, though the letter calls for thoughtful dialogue prior to any such changes rather than ruling out such changes as illegitimate.

Even as debate raged over the specific issue of queuing, the general situation in Kenya continued to deteriorate, with increased political strife, government repression, and economic decline. As the Moi government became increasingly repressive of opposition, the clergy remained one of the few voices of dissent in the country. As Timothy Njoya himself once noted, Moi’s respect for the Christian faith allowed the churchmen to get away with statements that would have landed anyone else in the country in jail.<sup>341</sup> Many of the sermons were highly attended. Sometimes printed copies of them were distributed. President Moi once referred to certain clergy who were using Sunday sermons to distribute subversive literature; many people saw this as a reference to

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<sup>340</sup> *Catholic Bishops' Open Memorandum to the President of the Republic*. November 13, 1986.

<sup>341</sup> *Washington Post*. October 26, 1986.

Njoya, a view shared by the reverend himself.<sup>342</sup> And newspapers were able to circumvent government censorship by publishing criticisms spoken in the context of Sunday sermons. Despite the relative liberty enjoyed by clergy, the freedom of speech afforded to clerics like Njoya was still limited. Njoya drew the ire of his superiors in the Church who wanted to maintain good relations with the state. In late 1986, the national leaders of the Presbyterian Church attempted to have Njoya sanctioned by his local presbytery following a controversial sermon, but these efforts failed when Njoya's local parish ruled him innocent of any wrongdoing.<sup>343</sup> The following March, Presbyterian Moderator George Wanjau, backed by former Moderator John Gatu, ordered Njoya be relocated from his prominent position in St. Andrew's in Nairobi to a rural parish in Njoya's home area of Nyeri.<sup>344</sup> Njoya was defiant, publicly castigating his church's national leadership for punishing him over his political beliefs and temporarily choosing to retire rather than accept his apparent demotion.<sup>345</sup> Though the Church leadership was publicly tightlipped on the reasons behind reassigning Njoya, the reverend himself and other observers saw the Church as bowing to government pressure to silence the cleric who President Moi had indirectly accused of being "subversive."<sup>346</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> For details on Njoya's transfer and early retirement, see: *Weekly Review* 3 March 1987, 27 March 1987.

<sup>343</sup> *Weekly Review*. March 6, 1987.

<sup>344</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>345</sup> Throup, David. "Render to Caesar the Things that are Caesar's." in Hansen, Holger Bernt, and Michael Twaddle, eds. *Religion & politics in East Africa: the period since independence*. James Currey Publishers, 1995: 156.

<sup>346</sup> *Weekly Review*. March 6, 1987.

The outspoken bishops of the Anglican Church also maintained their roles as gadflies, hitting the administration on a number of issues. Throughout 1988 and 1989, Bishop Muge complained about the poor response to famine in the country, and also called for the release of political prisoners.<sup>347</sup> When Bishop Gitari criticized the quality of delegates KANU was sending to the party's annual conference in October 1988, the party's secretary-general, Moses Mudavadi, threatened to curb the religious freedom of unruly clerics. This threat drew a harsh public rebuke from Archbishop Kuria, among others, and the government backed down, disassociating itself from Mudavadi's threat.<sup>348</sup> Despite this public win by the church, the restraint with which the government dealt with clerics slowly began to erode.

Despite the opposition from the churches and other civil society figures, KANU persisted with its repressive policies and its plans to use the queuing system in the 1988 legislative elections. Despite the President's attempt to diffuse the conflict with the churches by exempting clergy from the queuing process, the Catholics remained opposed to the system, and ambivalent on the general situation in the country.<sup>349</sup> In their January 1988 letter announcing the formation of a national Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, the bishops mention "violation of human rights in detention without trial" but also approvingly cite President Moi's Nyayo philosophy of "Peace, Love and

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<sup>347</sup> Throup 1995: 157-8.

<sup>348</sup> Ibid: 158-9.

<sup>349</sup> *Weekly Review*, 12 September 1986.

Unity.”<sup>350</sup> A follow-up letter by the Catholic bishops just before the 1988 elections is respectful and supportive of the President – again citing the “Love, Peace and Unity” mantra behind the government’s Nyayo slogan – but the letter is still mildly critical of queuing (even with exemption for clergy and other personnel).<sup>351</sup>

The Presbyterian Church belatedly entered the queuing debate in May 1988, with the General Assembly issuing a moderate statement that it ““believes that the most appropriate method of wananchi [citizens] to express their democratic right of electing their leaders is through the secret ballot”” and calling for a national referendum or similar public process to decide upon the type of voting system to be used.<sup>352</sup> Despite differing from the government on the issue of queuing, the Presbyterian Church also sought to maintain good relations with the President. Two days before passing the resolution addressing queuing, Moi was the guest speaker at the General Assembly, during which the President complimented the Presbyterians on a number of issues and pledged to support efforts by the Church to build new higher education facilities in the country.<sup>353</sup>

While the umbrella church organization NCKK protested strongly against the queuing system, a smaller collection of conservative denominations, the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya (EFK), supported the President in this matter and that opposition to the queuing system violated Biblical principles of deference to state authority. Moi’s

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<sup>350</sup> “Justice and Peace Commission: Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Kenya” 1 January 1988.

<sup>351</sup> “On the Occasion of the 1988 Elections: Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Kenya” December 1988.

<sup>352</sup> *Daily Nation*. April 29, 1988.

<sup>353</sup> *Daily Nation*. April 27, 1988.



church, the African Inland Church, supported the President by quitting the NCCCK in protest, along with several smaller conservative denominations, and joining the EFK.<sup>354</sup> The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, as was typical on controversial political issues, remained silent, despite support within the SDA membership for the churches opposing the queuing system.<sup>355</sup>

When KANU not only kept the queuing system for the 1988 elections, but also engaged in massive voter fraud and intimidation before and during the vote, Anglican Bishops Muge and Gitari went beyond words and took actions against the government's abuses. The bishops employed clerics in their dioceses to document the disparities in the vote count, which the queuing system made visually obvious to observers who saw candidates declared winners despite not having the longest queues.<sup>356</sup>

### ***3.1.2 Church Responses to Queuing: Preferences, Structure and Cooptation***

This unusually strong reaction from the protesting churches was not solely out of concern for the country's citizens. The queuing system was not just an attack on democracy, but also a direct challenge to church leaders. Queuing behind their preferred candidate would require the Bishops and other church officials to publicly declare their support for specific candidates. This was not a major problem for denominations like Moi's AIC, which enjoyed close ties with KANU and drew much of its membership from Moi's Kalenjin ethnic base. For churches populated by groups marginalized by KANU,

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<sup>354</sup> Karanja, John. "Evangelical Attitudes Towards Democracy in Kenya." *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa* (2008): 78.

<sup>355</sup> Nyaundi, Nehemiah M. *Religion and Social Change: A Sociological Study of Seventh-day Adventism in Kenya. Vol. 47.* Lund University Press, 1993: 210-211.

<sup>356</sup> Sabar 2002: 206-7.

however, a stark dilemma presented itself. Lining up behind KANU's preferred candidate might alienate a church leader's parishioners. In terms of the church preferences identified in Chapter 1, this would represent both declines in church leaders' reputations, as well as likely decreases in churches' membership. If church leaders instead chose to support their parishioners' preferred choices, these leaders risked incurring the wrath of the ruling party. And church leaders presiding over divided congregations or parishes ran the danger of alienating a section of the flock regardless of which candidates they supported. As NCKK Secretary-General Waira Kamau put it at the time: "a church leader or a pastor who is a reconciliator in his own way will have lost his positive neutral position if he lines up behind a candidate. What do you expect will happen if someone like Cardinal Otunga or Reverend John Gatu stood behind a candidate?"<sup>357</sup> The queuing issue thus hit the church leaders close to home, threatening their ability to effectively shepherd their followers. Even when KANU offered to exempt clergy from the system, the public nature of the process still threatened to divide congregations, as members would be forced to display their political preferences to one another. This could easily decrease camaraderie within the churches and possibly lead to schisms as some members exited their denominations, while those who remained would face animosity from those with different political views. Using the language of Chapter 1, queuing was a threat to both the quantity and faithfulness of church members, as well as a

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<sup>357</sup> Weekly Review. August 29, 1986.

danger to church leaders' reputations and abilities to lead their organizations effectively.<sup>358</sup>

Looking at the differences in church structure, it is clear that by this point, church centralization still played important roles in the differences in church response. But rather than seeking negotiations with religious leaders, Moi targeted church leaders for intimidation on one hand and benefits on the other. Concerning the former tactic, the President was not afraid to personally inform church leaders of his displeasure and pressure them into falling in line. Following a particularly controversial sermon by Presbyterian minister Timothy Njoya in October, 1986 (during the early debate over the queuing system), Moi summoned a delegation of church leaders to State House, including several Presbyterian leaders (Moderator Wanjau, Secretary-General Plawson Kuria, and former Moderator John Gatu), as well as top leaders of the Catholic (Cardinal Otunga), Anglican (Archbishop Kuria), and AIC (Ezekiel Birech) denominations. After this meeting, the Presbyterian leadership sent a letter to Njoya's immediate superior stating that the Church's national Moderator (Reverend Wanjau) had been "required by the State to give an immediate answer pertaining to the production and distribution of the Rev Dr Njoya's sermon," which had become "a Church-State issue."<sup>359</sup>

Moi also targeted churches and their leaders for various benefits. The President courted both the national and international leadership of the Seventh-Day Adventist

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<sup>358</sup> The dangers of the queuing system were broadly similar to those posed by oath-taking during President Kenyatta's time in office, as discussed in Chapter 2, and the churches' responses in both instances with atypically strong opposition to the government's endorsement of such policies.

<sup>359</sup> *Weekly Review*, June 12, 1987; *Daily Nation*, April 30, 2010.

Church, while continuing to appeal to the denomination's moral beliefs. In 1986, Kenya hosted the first Pan-Africa Adventist Youth Congress, personally addressing the assembly to praise the church and encourage it to continue to instill morality in young people.<sup>360</sup> Two years later, shortly before the 1988 election, Kenya hosted the worldwide SDA Church's Annual Council meeting, which coincided with both the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Kenya's independence and the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Moi's Nyayo state. At the SDA meeting, Kenya's Vice-President at the time, Josephat Karanja, met with the world President of the Church, Neal Wilson, and publicly greeted the Council.<sup>361</sup> Later, President Moi received the world SDA President, and a delegation from the Church, during which time Moi reiterated protection of freedom of religion.<sup>362</sup> SDA President Wilson responded to the government's overtures by publicly congratulating President Moi and thanking him for upholding religious freedom generally, and for protecting Adventists in Kenya who refused to work on Saturday from being fired from their jobs in particular.<sup>363</sup> During this trip, the SDA head also pledged funds for development and education projects in Kenya, and in a symbolic gesture, personally gave Moi a study Bible.<sup>364</sup> Meanwhile, Moi maintained a close relationship with Bishop Birech of the Africa Inland Church, which had spearheaded the Christian defense of the President to

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<sup>360</sup> *South Pacific Record and Adventist World Survey*. July 19, 1986.

<sup>361</sup> *General Conference Committee minutes for October, 1988*.

<sup>362</sup> *Record: Official Paper Seventh-day Adventist Church South Pacific Division*. December 17, 1988.

<sup>363</sup> *Adventist Review*. 27 October, 1988.

<sup>364</sup> *Record* 17 December 1988.

counter the critical churches during the queuing controversy. After leaving the NCKC for the rival EFK umbrella group, the AIC became one of the largest funding sources of the EFK and thus had a large say in its decision-making processes.<sup>365</sup> The EFK consistently supporting the regime, basing their relationship with the government on Romans. 13:1-2, a Biblical scripture calling for subjection to political authority.<sup>366</sup> The Africa Inland Church benefited from its allegiance to President Moi, as did its Bishop, Ezekiel Birech. Among the benefits that came from supporting Moi, the Bishop's son, John Cheruiyot, was elected as an MP under the queuing system and made a government Minister.<sup>367</sup>

During the Second Nyayo Era, church structure continued to play a role in church-state interactions, as more centralized and less accountable church leadership was facilitated more friendly church-state relations. However, because the strategy of the state had changed from one of consultation to one of control and cooptation, the mechanism by which structure lead to church political stances changed, as well. Rather than easing negotiation, centralization and unaccountability became important because these features also eased cooptation of church leaders by the state. Contrary to the assertion of Ngunyi, Moi had not initially set out to break the ties that had carried over from the Kenyatta era between the government and the largest mainstream denominations, as demonstrated by Moi's early attempts to coopt the Anglican Church and the initially cordial relations between the Catholic Church and the Moi government. But whereas Kenyatta valued these larger, nationwide denominations for their size and

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<sup>365</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 160.

<sup>366</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 142-143; Karanga 2008: 71-72.

<sup>367</sup> Throup 1995: 168.

ability to partner with the government for service and development efforts, Moi found these denominations too independent and difficult to control. He instead opted to cut off Catholic and Anglican churches, publicly dismissing their criticisms and attempting to discredit the strongest critics among them. He instead sought to ally with denominations such as the Africa Inland Church, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, and even the Presbyterian Church, as these denominations were smaller, more regionally-based and more centralized, making them easier to coopt. He furthermore pursued relationships with smaller, “evangelical” churches, many of which were represented in the EFK. These churches were generally smaller and more centralized, and could be controlled through patronage and cooptation of church leaders.

### ***3.2 The Multiparty Debates: 1989-1991***

In the aftermath of the 1988 elections in Kenya, the Anglican Bishops had maintained their oppositional stance against KANU, and the government began losing its patience with the recalcitrant clergy. In April 1989, Bishop Gitari had one of his sermons heckled by youth he believed were hired by KANU, and his home was later attacked by armed thugs, with the bishop and his family narrowly escaping.<sup>368</sup> Bishop Okullu predicted in 1989 that African dictators would suffer the same fate as recently deposed Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu.<sup>369</sup> Presbyterian Reverend Timothy Njoya, having been restored to the ministry after his brief retirement, echoed these sentiments in his New Years Eve sermon, asserting that the events in Eastern Europe demonstrated the ills

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<sup>368</sup> Sabar 2002: 209-210.

<sup>369</sup> Sabar 2002: 213.

of one-party states. He argued that the one-party system was an import from Europe that had failed in the African context, and called for a multi-party system instead.<sup>370</sup>

These words, particularly Njoya's sermon, kicked off a spirited and hostile debate within Kenyan politics and society over multi-party democracy. The discourse divided the clergy. Rev Njoya and Bishop Okullu continued to push for the end of the one-party system, while Bishop Gitari came short of demanding multi-party democracy as a necessary part of reform. Anglican Bishop Muge, usually a strong critic of the KANU state, actually agreed with the government's position that multi-party politics would lead to ethnic strife.<sup>371</sup> Archbishop Kuria, speaking on behalf of the Anglican Church as a whole, defended the Church against accusations of subversion coming from the government, but declined to take a stance on the issue of multiparty democracy, citing the differing opinions within the denomination.<sup>372</sup>

### ***3.2.1 Transformation of the Catholic Church: Structural Reform and Political Activism***

The Catholic Church's opposition to queuing had not translated into a more general critical stance. On the contrary, the sole Catholic Pastoral Letter from 1989, on the Church's "Centenary of Evangelization in Kenya" is mostly apolitical, apart from quoting a previous letter concerning rising inequality and injustice. As part of the Catholic Church's centenary celebration, the Church tapped expatriate priest John Baur to write a history of the Church in Kenya. As late as 1989, Father Baur could write in this

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<sup>370</sup> *Weekly Review* 12 January 1990.

<sup>371</sup> *Weekly Review*. May 4, 1990.

<sup>372</sup> Sabar 2002: 215.

book that “President Moi also has expected positive support from the Churches. So far he cannot complain about the attitude of Catholic Church leaders and has noted with satisfaction their restraint in recent political controversies.”<sup>373</sup> Baur acknowledges criticisms of the Catholic bishops for not being as vocal as other church leaders, but makes a distinction between speaking out on issues such as birth-control or growing injustice, which the Catholic Church had addressed, and being “drawn into ordinary politics.”<sup>374</sup>

The Catholic Church essentially operated under two overlapping administrative structures, essentially giving it two “heads”. On the one hand, the Archbishop of Nairobi, chosen by the Vatican and enjoying security of tenure until reaching the Vatican-mandated retirement age of seventy-five, was the highest ranking Catholic in the country, and he was viewed both inside and outside the Church as the de facto head of the Catholic Church in Kenya. Cardinal Maurice Otunga remained Archbishop of Nairobi until his retirement in 1997. On the other hand, since 1970 the Church had also made decisions on social and political matters through the Kenya Episcopal Conference, the collection of all the countries bishops that met periodically, elected a chairman from among the bishops for set terms of three years, and made policy decisions based on supermajority rule. Except when the same individual occupied both roles, these dual structures gave the Catholic Church two leaders.

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<sup>373</sup> Baur, John, and Hans Burgman. *The Catholic Church in Kenya: A Centenary History*. St. Paul Publications-Africa, 1990: 222-223.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid.



In May 1990, the leadership of the Church was multiplied further when the Vatican increased the number of archdioceses in the country from one to four, elevating the dioceses of Kisumu, Mombasa and Nyeri to the same status that the archdiocese of Nairobi enjoyed. This decentralization of national-level Catholic Church leadership decreased the ability of the government to target any individual for negotiation, intimidation or inducements. Table 3.4 lists the Catholic Archbishops who were in office during the Moi presidency. The new archbishops were from groups who had long been marginalized under Moi: John Njenga and Nicodemus Kirima were from the GEMA ethnic bloc, while Zacchaeus Okoth was Luo (the ethnic group of Oginda and Raila Odinga). Besides their own ethnic identities, the archdioceses they administered were all outside of Moi's home region of Rift Valley Province.<sup>375</sup> The structural transformation of the Catholic Church diversified the interests represented by Church leadership. The increase in the number of Catholic leaders thus set the stage for less cooperative Catholic Church-state relations, as was reflected almost immediately in the more critical tone taken by the bishops in their pastoral letters and other statements.

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<sup>375</sup> The new Archdiocese of Kisumu, Nyeri and Mombasa were located in Nyanza, Central, and Coast Provinces, respectively.

<b>Table 3.4: Catholic Church Leaders During Moi Presidency</b>			
Archdiocese	Archbishop	Term in Office	Ethnic Group
Nairobi	Maurice Michael Otunga	1971-1997	Luhya
	Raphael S. Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki	1997-2007	Kamba
	John Njue	2007-2012	GEMA
Kisumu (becomes Archdiocese 1990)	Zacchaeus Okoth	1978-2012	Luo
Mombasa (becomes Archdiocese 1990)	John Njenga	1988-2005	GEMA
	Boniface Lele	2005-2012	Kamba
Nyeri (becomes Archdiocese 1990)	Nicodemus Kirima	1988-2007	GEMA
	Peter J. Kairo	2008-2012	

Just after this structural transformation in 1990, the Catholic Church's position shifted radically, as it fully embraced a role as critic of the government.<sup>376</sup> That year's only official Catholic Pastoral Letter begins on a supportive note, echoing earlier letters: "Thus, we want to restate here what we have already said: 'The President deserves the support of the whole Nation in his many efforts to build up what we want: Love, Peace and Unity.'"<sup>377</sup> From here, however, the letter makes a noted departure from previous statements. Whereas previous letters mentioned criticisms of government policies in passing while making general statements about societal ills, this one focuses in detail on

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<sup>376</sup> Throup and Hornsby 1998: 156.

<sup>377</sup> "On the Present Situation in Our Country: Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of Kenya." 20 June 1990.

multiple issues specifically related to government misdeeds. The letter declines to directly endorse a multi-party system, but joined the critiques of the one-party state:

The Catholic Church, without proposing any particular economic or political system or programme, has recently restated that "no social group, for example a political party, has the right to usurp the role of sole leader, since this brings about the destruction of the true subjectivity of society and of individual citizens, as happens in every form of totalitarianism. In this situation the individual and the people become "objects," in spite of all declarations of the contrary and verbal assurances.

The Catholic letter directly challenges the ruling KANU party:

During the last three years a process of increasing identification of the party with the official government has been taking place. Whoever raises any criticism against some particular measures taken by the party is considered to be attacking the government of Kenya. Furthermore, the superiority of the party over the authority of the parliament seems to be an accomplished fact.

From there, the letter gives a litany of complaints about the KANU government, including the totalitarian nature of the party, violation of freedom of speech, the queuing system and electoral "rigging", inflation, corruption, and forced harambees (fundraisers) imposed upon citizens by government officials. The letter even mentions fear of Latin American style "political murders" taking root in Kenya, a possible reference to the brutal killing earlier that year of Kenyan Foreign Minister Robert Ouko, whose unsolved murder was reminiscent of the political killings of the Kenyatta era.<sup>378</sup> The bishops endorse calls for a national conference bringing together civil society voices to address these issues. Acknowledging the debates going on in the country over the one-party

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<sup>378</sup> Shortly after accompanying President Moi on a trip to the United States, during which time Moi was coldly received by US officials, Ouko's body was found burned, with a bullet wound in his head. Two of Moi's closest aides were arrested in connection with the killing and resigned their posts, but were never charged with a crime in relation to the killing. A third official, who was close to Ouko, was tried but acquitted of involvement in the murder (Branch 2011: 190-192).

political system, and seemingly aware of the Catholic Church's own hesitancy to be involved in "ordinary politics" the letter concludes in part by stating that

the issues we have mentioned in this letter constitute fundamental problems for our country and their solutions are a must for any country under any political system whatsoever. More than being merely political, these issues raise ethical questions of justice and human rights. What has emerged clearly from the public debate on the political system is a general agreement that the present structures have weaknesses that need to be set right.

### ***3.2.2 Continued Debate and the End of the One-Party State***

Initially, the government responded to the calls for multi-party democracy by publicly defending the one-party state and challenging the motives of those who opposed it. When the KANU government could not quash this debate, it sought to manage it. It announced an upcoming conference where various sectors of politics and civil society could debate the issues. This conference was to be called "The Kenya We Want", echoing the title of a chapter in the 1983 NCKK publication *A Christian View of Politics in Kenya*.<sup>379</sup> When the government attempted an about-face by announcing the debate closed and changing the conference to "The KANU We Want", a more limited discussion of the ruling party, the Catholic and Anglican churches responded with official pastoral letters forcefully calling on the government to stick to its original promises, though the letters fell short of explicitly endorsing multi-party politics.<sup>380</sup>

A low point for Kenya came in July 1990, when the government arrested several politicians planning to hold a pro-democracy rally. When thousands showed up for the rally anyway on July 7, the brutal police repression against them sparked several days of

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<sup>379</sup> Sabar 2002: 214.

<sup>380</sup> Ibid: 221-222

rioting in multiple towns that left over 30 dead and thousands arrested.<sup>381</sup> In the wake of the *Saba Saba* (Swahili for “Seven Seven”) riots, the churches responded with some of their harshest words to date. Bishop Okullu and Rev Njoya demanded the government resign, and Catholic Cardinal Otunga called for a transition government to be created.<sup>382</sup> Presbyterian Moderator George Wanjau did not echo these more radical denunciations of the government, but he did join Anglican Archbishop Kuria and church leaders from other denominations in a milder statement attributing the riots to ““deeper problems in the society which would not be solved through violence””<sup>383</sup> The government condemned this mild statement as well as the stronger words coming from the Anglican and Catholic Churches.

The government went ahead with its plans for limited debate on the political issues of the day, with the KANU Review Committee holding a forum in July and August 1990 for members of civil society and ordinary citizens to express their opinions on “the KANU we want.” Once open, however, these hearings went far beyond the scope intended by the government. Several of the churchmen testified early in the process, laying out their many challenges to the government, and various citizens in the country followed their lead.<sup>384</sup> This process led to the party adopting some changes, for example

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<sup>381</sup> Ibid: 223.

<sup>382</sup> Ibid.

<sup>383</sup> Ibid.

<sup>384</sup> Ibid: 224-225. Church criticism continued outside of this forum as well. For instance, Archbishop Kuria publicly accused the KANU government of having “institutionalized” corruption. *New York Times*. August 13, 1990.

ending the queuing system, but it did not yet bring more far-reaching consequences for the political structures of the country.

On August 14, 1990, Bishop Muge died in a car crash during a visit to Busia district, one day after a government minister had threatened that the bishop would “see fire and may not leave alive” if he went there.<sup>385</sup> The public took note of the suspicious circumstances of this death. Archbishop Kuria called for an inquiry into the event, but accepted the official views that the bishop’s death was an accident and called for calm to remain among the people.<sup>386</sup> Despite taking a moderate tone in this instance, Archbishop Kuria remained at times a harsh critic of the government. When a government minister was forced to resign under corruption charges in January 1991, Kuria held a “prayer meeting” for the ousted politician at the prominent All-Saints Cathedral in Nairobi, allowing the dismissed official to address a crowd of thousands with his accusations of political abuse and tribalism.<sup>387</sup> When Kuria attempted to hold a similar meeting shortly after the anniversary of the *Saba Saba* riots, with a large presence from the opposition group the Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) planned, the government intimidated the church leaders from having the meeting with barely-veiled threats of lethal repression.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>385</sup> *Weekly Review*. 17 August 1990.

<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>387</sup> The dismissed cabinet minister was from the Kamba ethnic group, and alleged that his dismissal was part of a policy of replacing non-Kalenjin officials (Sabar 2002: 239).

<sup>388</sup> Sabar 2002: 241-243.

Having just elected Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth as the new Kenya Episcopal Conference Chairman (1991-1997), the Catholic Church would go on in April 1991 to release a balanced public message, complimenting the government for the reforms it had enacted, such as abolishing the queuing voting system, while pressing the government to continue with more reforms on issues such as detainees.<sup>389</sup> Finally, an additional statement was released in September 1991, addressing additional concerns such as rising food prices, ethnic conflict, irregularities in the education system, and selective enforcement of citizens' freedom of expression. While covering a number of issues, the tone of this letter is less confrontational than in 1990.<sup>390</sup>

The Presbyterian Church maintained an ambivalent position throughout this period. The top Presbyterian leadership did not side with church officials (including Presbyterian Reverend Njoya) who were calling for the government to step down after the Saba Saba riots, but the Moderator did sign off on a weaker statement presented by various denominations to the government.<sup>391</sup> When Reverend Njoya, who had previously been disciplined by the church hierarchy for his political sermons, made his controversial New Years remarks against the one-party state, Moderator Wanjau essentially declined to directly enter the debate. While stating that Njoya's remarks did not reflect an official position of the Presbyterian Church, he also publicly supported Njoya's right to speak out

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<sup>389</sup> "Declaration of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya." April 19, 1991.

<sup>390</sup> Note that the arguments of this dissertation do not contend that church decentralization *must* result in oppositional stances from that church, only that decentralized leadership makes church opposition more likely, because having multiple individuals playing the roles of church leaders and spokesmen lessens the government's ability to negotiate with churches or coopt them.

<sup>391</sup> Sabar 2002: 223.

against injustices as the reverend perceived them.<sup>392</sup> On the other hand, the Presbyterian Church also enjoyed cordial relations with the KANU government during this period. President Moi was again a guest of honor at the Presbyterian's triennial General Assembly meetings in 1988 and 1991, as well as the church's centenary celebration in September 1991, where he praised the work of the Presbyterians and other missionary churches in Kenya.<sup>393</sup> During his 1991 General Assembly appearance, Moi took the opportunity to urge churches to resolve any disagreements they had with the government through consultation, while castigating critics who had instead taken their complaints public.<sup>394</sup>

While the Presbyterian Church's friendliness with the Moi government had been tempered by criticisms of issues such as the Saba Saba riots, the African Inland Church and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church remained uncritically supportive of the President. Moi remained an AIC member in good standing. Continuing to play off of the Seventh-Day Adventist's concerns about religious freedom, Moi hosted the SDA's International Religious Liberty Congress in September, 1991, personally addressing the gathering.<sup>395</sup>

Despite the support of these and some smaller denominations, political pressure against the government continued to mount from church leaders, civil society and international actors. Pressure from abroad included a decision in August 1991 by the Paris Group to delay considerations of economic aid until Kenya reformed its economy

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<sup>392</sup> *Weekly Review*. January 12, 1990.

<sup>393</sup> Muita 2003 :99.

<sup>394</sup> *Kenya Broadcasting Company*. 16 April 1991.

<sup>395</sup> *Adventist Review*. October 10, 1991.



and political system.<sup>396</sup> After defying the call for political liberalization for two years, the government finally bowed to this pressure, and In December 1991 repealed Section 2A and other portions of the constitution, officially making Kenya a multi-party state.<sup>397</sup>

By the end of the Second Nyayo Era, the Anglican, Catholic and Presbyterian churches had all made statements critical of President Moi's government. Nonetheless, the three "oppositional churches" varied in the timing and intensity of their criticisms of the government. The Anglican Church emerged earliest as an intense critic of the KANU government. The Catholic Church would join the Anglicans in the severity of their comments, but the Catholic bishops took longer to adopt an oppositional tone, and this change in the Catholic stance came rather abruptly in 1990. The Presbyterian hierarchy eventually joined in the criticisms, but later and less intensely than the others.

As the churches' political orientations took shape during the Second Nyayo Era, it is important to understand why the denominations varied as they did along this dimension. The ethnic and organizational features of the churches both provide partial explanations for the political orientation displayed by each denomination, but internal organization better accounts for the positions taken by these churches. Many commentaries on this era attribute the churches' activities to ethnic considerations: the Kalenjin-heavy AIC supported Moi, while the other churches, controlled by politically excluded groups such as the Kikuyu, opposed the President. While church opposition can be painted in broad strokes as a story of ethnic antagonism, ethnic considerations alone do not explain all of the variation in the churches' stances. For instance, the

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<sup>396</sup> Sabar 2002: 245.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid.

Presbyterian Church leadership and membership are both overwhelmingly comprised of the GEMA ethnic groups, who lost the most influence from Moi's ascension and subsequent policies, yet theirs was the weakest of the three church critiques.

The variation between these three churches can be explained by an inverse relationship between the levels of centralization and autocracy within their internal organization and their level of opposition to the government. As noted in Chapter 1, more centralized churches are more likely to form cordial relationships with governments for at least one of two reasons. By concentrating power in one or a few individuals, these churches either facilitate negotiation with government by minimizing the number of individuals speaking on behalf of the church, or they more easily allow cooptation by minimizing the number of people who have to be intimidated or enticed to cooperate with the government. Autocracy, or lack of internal democracy and accountability mechanisms, further facilitates church-state cooperation by lowering the chance that agreements made between church leaders and governments will be vetoed or violated by other important actors within the church. As Ngunyi has noted, despite the seemingly representative structure of Presbyterianism, the Presbyterian Church in Kenya concentrated authority in the hands of the Church's Moderator, who in consultation with his deputy, the Secretary-General, could unilaterally decide Presbyterian Church stances on political issues.<sup>398</sup>

As noted previously, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church supported the government because the government in turn gave the SDA both material and ideological support. This process was facilitated by the nature of leadership within the SDA, as its

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<sup>398</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 156.

Executive Directors were appointed from above. Because President Moi was able to ingratiate himself to the international leaders of the Adventist Church, he thereby gained the local support of the SDA in Kenya, even though many of its members came from the excluded Luo ethnic group.

The support given to Moi by his own Africa Inland Church is over-determined, though consistent with the arguments that centralization and lack of internal accountability facilitate church-state cooperation. As Ngunyi notes, “it is difficult to distinguish whether the adoption of an ethnic advocacy politics in the AIC was a result of unilateral decisions by its KANU-connected leaders or reflects a more general openness to popular pressure. The AIC’s bishop was heavily patronized by the state and happened to share common political goals with the ruling elite.”<sup>399</sup> The organizational structure of the Africa Inland Church need not have played a significant role in determining AIC support for President Moi for the simple reason that the leaders and members of this denomination had shared interests in supporting Moi as their fellow church member (and for many AIC members, their co-ethnic), especially given the patronage Moi provided to them and their communities. Therefore, variation in the factors related to internal organization, such as centralized executive leadership, concentrated legislative powers, and democratic control or oversight, would not have changed the actions of the AIC since its members and leaders had the same goals.

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<sup>399</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 160.

## **4 The Multi-Party Democracy Era, 1992-2002**

### ***4.1 Church Involvement in the 1992 Election***

With the reforms of December 1991, multi-party electoral competition dominated the political discourse in Kenya, peaking with the elections of 1992, 1997 and 2002. A number of political parties formed or received official status after having operated illegally. The newly registered parties largely splintered along ethnic lines, and President Moi took advantage of the divided opposition to win plurality victories in the 1992 and 1997 elections. The reforms implemented in 1991 imposed term limits on the presidency, barring Moi for running in 2002. In this election, the opposition managed to form a unified front, handily defeating Moi's chosen successor and ending four decades of KANU rule. The churches largely maintained their respective stances in favor or against the incumbent KANU government. With the opening of the political system, however, the churches taking stands *against* KANU now had the option to stand *for* another party as well.

Prominent political leaders outside of the ruling clique, who had been united by their opposition to the KANU government, wasted no time to position themselves to contest the 1992 elections. Among the multiple parties that emerged, three were significant forces in the 1992 election. The Forum of the Restoration of Democracy (FORD), outlawed for most of 1991, emerged as a formidable threat to KANU. The two most prominent leaders within FORD were Oginga Odinga and Kenneth Matiba. Oginga had been Kenya's first Vice-President, but soon split with Jomo Kenyatta and became a perennial opposition figure during both the Kenyatta and Moi presidencies, and had been subject to detention and harassment over the decades based on his political agitations and

multiple attempts to form opposition parties. Kenneth Matiba, a wealthy businessman, had been a cabinet minister in the early Moi government, but became a critic of KANU and its queuing system after losing a local party chairmanship in 1988 due to rigged elections. Matiba eventually resigned from his cabinet position in protest, and was subsequently expelled from the party and parliament.<sup>400</sup>

Matiba and Odinga together represented powerful Kikuyu and Luo voting blocs, but could not agree on which of the two politicians would top the FORD presidential ticket.<sup>401</sup> This dispute split the party in two, with Odinga heading a FORD-Kenya party and Matiba's party becoming known as FORD-Asili. The third major party to emerge ahead of the 1992 elections was the Democratic Party, founded by Mwai Kibaki. Kibaki had been part of the political establishment, serving as Moi's first Vice-President, and had held a number of cabinet positions spanning the Kenyatta and Moi presidencies. With multi-party politics legalized, Kibaki took the opportunity to resign from his post within the KANU government and found an opposition party. Kibaki, and Matiba were both Kikuyus, albeit from different regions, Nyeri and Muranga, respectively.

The ethnic-based split in opposition parties became reflected in the activities of the "oppositional" churches. Though the churches remained formally neutral, they became identified with particular opposition parties. The Anglican Church continued to be identified with FORD after the latter became a legal opposition party. When Kenneth Matiba returned to Kenya in May 1992 after a year spent recuperating from a stroke in

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<sup>400</sup> Hornsby 2013: 461; Sabar 2002: 197, 207.

<sup>401</sup> Khamisi, Joe. *The Politics of Betrayal: Diary of a Kenyan Legislator*. Trafford Publishing, 2011: 57-58.

Britain, he was greeted with a large ceremony at the Anglican All Saints Cathedral.<sup>402</sup>

The division within FORD also divided the vocal Anglican Church members. While not officially endorsing any party, Archbishop Kuria and Bishop Gitari, both Kikuyu, identified with Matiba's FORD-Asili, while Luo Bishop Henry Okullu was associated with Odinga's FORD-Kenya.<sup>403</sup>

Ethnic clashes raged in Kenya in the lead-up to the 1992 election. These conflicts, mostly in the Rift Valley between Kalenjin on one side and so-called "settler" communities – Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu - on the other, were widely seen as instigated by KANU, both to "prove" the government's argument that multi-party politics would lead to ethnic strife, and to secure KANU vote shares in the Rift Valley by displacing groups likely to support the opposition parties.<sup>404</sup> The latter motive was important because the Kenyan constitution required that a winning presidential candidate not only receive a plurality of the national popular vote, but also receive at least 25% of the vote in five of the country's eight provinces.<sup>405</sup> While such requirements are intended to force candidates to make broad appeals across regions, they can also create incentives for manipulating the electorate, in this case violently. KANU's strategy worked, as President Moi was the only candidate to meet the 25% requirement in five provinces, and the

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<sup>402</sup> Press, Robert M. "Behind Africa's Setbacks, Push for Reform Persists." *Christian Science Monitor*. May 5, 1992.

<sup>403</sup> Sabar 2002: 249; Hornsby 2013: 523. See also *Kenya Television Network* April 17 1992, cited in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* April 20, 1992; "Kenya: Moi Profits from Divided Opposition" *IPS-Inter Press Service*. September 8, 1992.

<sup>404</sup> Sabar 2002: 247.

<sup>405</sup> Oyugi, Walter O. "Ethnicity In The Electoral Process: The 1992 General Elections In Kenya" *African Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 2, No. 1. 1997: 41-69.

violence successfully prevented any of his rivals from reaching this vote share in Rift Valley.<sup>406</sup>

The Anglican and Catholic Churches again called the government to task on the issue of ethnic violence. A high-ranking KANU official was cited in the Kenyan press as accusing Archbishop Kuria of “open bias” against KANU after the cleric allegedly blamed the clashes on the government.<sup>407</sup> The Presbyterian Church released an unusually harsh letter concerning the ethnic violence on April 23, 1992, which was reprinted in full two days later in the *Daily Nation* newspaper. The statement, signed by Moderator Bernard Muindi (in office 1991-1997) and his deputy, accuses KANU politicians of inciting the violence, and, in its strongest words to the government, states the Presbyterian Church “that a government which is either unable or unwilling to accord protection to its subjects may cease to have legitimacy and hence may not be entitled to the allegiance of its people.”<sup>408</sup>

The Catholic Church addressed these clashes in several of the many Pastoral Letters it released in 1992. While it never directly blames the government for instigating the clashes, the Catholic Church heavily implies government complicity, if not direct planning, in the violence. The Catholic letters note the apparent organization involved in the attacks, suggesting that some individuals or groups are working behind the scenes. The letters explicitly hold the authorities responsible for failing to stop the clashes. In

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<sup>406</sup> Ibid: 58.

<sup>407</sup> “Kenya Archbishop Accused of “Open Bias” against Ruling Party” *Kenya Television Network* March 24, 1992. Cited in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts*. March 26, 1992.

<sup>408</sup> The Presbyterian Church of East Africa. “Laikipia General Administrative Committee Statement on the So-Called ‘Ethnic Clashes.’” Reprinted in *Daily Nation*, April 25, 1992.

perhaps the Catholic bishops' harshest letter rebuking the government, the bishops state that

Whether our Government leaders accept it or not, the overwhelming majority of thinking people of Kenya have now accepted that the Government is not in control or has not got the political will to change the existing situation. If these ideas are true, then the Government has no legitimate claim to remain in power and should consider the good of the people as their first consideration.<sup>409</sup>

The Catholic Bishops did not endorse any political party, but continued to make their displeasure with the incumbent government known.<sup>410</sup> Their pastoral letters spoke in favor of allowing political opposition generally and condemns government discrimination in favor of KANU and against other political parties, as well as occasionally indicating that the country would be served by a change in leadership.<sup>411</sup> Notwithstanding these criticisms, the Kenyan Catholic Church's formal neutrality allowed it to serve as one of the groups that monitored the election for evidence of wrongdoing; despite the political preferences of Archbishop Kuria and other Anglican Bishops, the Anglican Church also remained formally neutral, with Kuria leading a separate monitoring group.<sup>412</sup> The

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<sup>409</sup> *Message of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya*. May 22, 1992.

<sup>410</sup> Though many Catholics backed Kibaki, the church leadership did not accept offers to formally endorse him in 1992 or 1997. See Maupeu, Herve. "The Churches and the Polls" in Rutten, Marinus MEM, and Alamin M. Mazrui. *Out for the Count: The 1997 General Elections and Prospects for Democracy in Kenya*. Fountain Pub Ltd, 2001: 55, 66-67.

<sup>411</sup> For example, the bishops argued that in the situation prevailing before the election, "Kenyans look for a substantial change of political structures not just for superficial arrangements and compromise with the status quo," before stating that "unfortunately, there seems to be little hope for such substantial changes coming from the present political authorities. The alternative is in the hands of the people of Kenya..." "Pre-Election Concerns: Our Responsibility as Christians in the Present Situation." August 15, 1992.

<sup>412</sup> Throup and Hornsby: 276.



Presbyterian Church did not endorse any candidate, and Moderator Muindi warned its ministers against openly campaigning for a candidate or party.<sup>413</sup> While the Seventh-Day Adventist Church similarly did not endorse a candidate, in keeping with their practice to keep secular politics at arms length. Yet the SDA maintained friendly relations with Moi. During another of his visits to Kenya, the international president of the Seventh-Day Adventist church visited President Moi and pledged his Church's support to the government.<sup>414</sup> The Africa Inland Church supported President Moi and KANU throughout Moi's presidency.

#### ***4.2 Church Involvement in the 1997 Election***

President Moi took advantage of the divided opposition and the KANU-approved election rules to win reelection despite gaining less than 40% of the vote. Even though the opposition collectively polled very well, the outcome of the 1992 election did not bring Moi's opponents together. On the contrary, the political opposition became even more fragmented in the years leading up to the 1997 election. After Oginga Odinga's death in 1994, Ford-Kenya suffered a leadership dispute between Luhya politician Michael Wamalwa, who eventually won internal elections to become party head, and Odinga's son, Raila, who led a Luo exodus from Ford-Kenya, joining the National Development Party. A similar leadership struggle within Ford-Asili led to Martin

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<sup>413</sup> "Kenya Curfew in Land Clash Areas; Church Leaders Call for Security Controls" *Kenya News Agency*. February 13, 1992, cited in *BBC Summary of World Broadcasts* February 15, 1992.

<sup>414</sup> Gifford, P. "Christianity Co-opted." in Gitari, David M. *Religion and Politics in Kenya*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. 204.

Shikuku, a Luhya, assuming leadership from Kenneth Matiba, who quit the party. Only Kibaki's Democratic Party remained intact.

The Catholic Church continued to be vocal, regularly releasing pastoral letters and other statements. A particularly harsh letter came in April, 1993, amid continuing ethnic violence in the Rift Valley Province. The bishops castigate several high-ranking KANU officials for making statements that fomented ethnic conflict; President Moi and Vice-President George Saitoti are among those named in the letter, along with details of the date, location and content of their offensive remarks.<sup>415</sup> While the bulk of the criticism in these letters is directed against the government, opposition leaders receive some critical words as well; in one letter, the bishops “deplore the selfish power-seeking struggles which are becoming evident among opposition leaders.”<sup>416</sup>

The Anglican Church was relatively quiet during this period, due to a host of internal problems. Two Church officials were involved in separate sex scandals, and ethnic divisions led to leadership squabbles in several dioceses.<sup>417</sup> There was also a leadership vacuum, as Archbishop Kuria spent most of 1994 on sabbatical in the United States before retiring at the end of the year, and his de facto replacement, Bishop Gitari, was not formally elected Archbishop for two years.<sup>418</sup> This election was contentious, as

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<sup>415</sup> “Our Hope for Unity, Peace, and Liberty: Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Kenya” 24 April 1993.

<sup>416</sup> “‘He Has Sent Me to Announce Good News to the Poor:’ Statement the Kenya Catholic Bishops” November 12, 1994.

<sup>417</sup> Maupeu 2001: 60-61.

<sup>418</sup> Ibid: 61.

Gitari's candidacy was opposed by a group of bishops from the western part of the country who felt that Kuria should not be replaced by another Kikuyu.<sup>419</sup>

While Moi continued to enjoy the unquestioning support of his own Africa Inland Church and friendly denominations such as the Seventh-Day Adventists, the President also made an unusual overture toward other Christian leaders. In 1994, Moi appointed a ten-person commission to explore the problem of devil worship in Kenya. The ten-man "Commission of Inquiry into Devil Worship in Kenya" was chaired by Catholic Archbishop Nicodemus Kirima of Nyeri Archdiocese, and included the then-current Presbyterian Moderator, Bernard Muindi, and Horace Etemesi, a bishop of the Anglican Church.<sup>420</sup> This attempt to coopt church leaders met with mixed results; while Archbishop Kirima and Moderator Muindi were relatively quiet on political matters during this time period, the commission was criticized and dismissed by other prominent figures within their denominations, including Catholic Archbishop Raphael Ndingi and Presbyterian cleric Timothy Njoya.<sup>421</sup>

During the years after the 1992 election, Kenya was rocked by a series of events that implicated the government in various forms of wrongdoing. In early 1993, a whistleblower sparked a flurry of local and international press coverage of what became known as the Goldenberg scandal, named after a company that received billions of shillings from the government, ostensibly to subsidize exports of gold and diamonds,

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<sup>419</sup> Gitari, David M. *Religion and Politics in Kenya*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2009: 24.

<sup>420</sup> *Sunday Nation*. August 29, 1999.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid.

when in reality such exports were almost completely non-existent.<sup>422</sup> This scandal implicated various high-level government officials, as well as opposition politicians who received donations from the fraudulent company. The lead-up to the 1997 elections saw renewed violence in Rift Valley, which spread to other parts of the country as well.<sup>423</sup> In addition to the “tribal clashes” that were allowed or encouraged by the government, security forces also perpetrated violence against political agitators, such as those demanding extensive constitutional reforms before the 1997 election. One notorious incident occurred on the anniversary of the *Saba Saba* riots, as security forces followed a group of rally participants into the Anglican All Saints Cathedral and savagely beat those inside, including the participants of the prayer meeting that was in progress at the time. Among those attacked was the outspoken Presbyterian Reverend Timothy Njoya, who needed to be hospitalized for several days after the beating he endured.<sup>424</sup> The Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches all condemned the attack.<sup>425</sup>

In the aftermath of this incident, President Moi revived the practice of high-level meetings between himself and the top national leaders of the churches, including those denominations that had been critical of his regime.<sup>426</sup> By 1997, there had been significant

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<sup>422</sup> Branch 2011: 218-219.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid: 221-227.

<sup>424</sup> Muita 2003: 216-217.

<sup>425</sup> “Kenyan Churches Condemn Cathedral Invasion” *All Africa Press Service*. July 14, 1997.

<sup>426</sup> Among the nearly two dozen religious leaders who met with President Moi on July 15 and August 4, 1990, were: Catholic Bishop John Njue, Chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference; Anglican Archbishop David Gitari and Bishop Joseph Wesonga (the latter

turnover in the top leadership of the churches. Catholic Cardinal Otunga, approaching the Church's mandatory retirement age of 75, retired in 1997. The Vatican chose as his successor Bishop Raphael Ndingi, who had built a reputation for outspokenness and would continue this trend as Archbishop.<sup>427</sup> In the same year, Zacchaeus Okoth was succeeded as Kenya Episcopal Conference Chairman by Bishop John Njue. Anglican Archbishop Manasses Kuria reached his denomination's mandatory retirement age in 1994, though a permanent replacement would not be chosen until 1997, when the bishops and lay representatives of the Anglican Church elected longtime government critic Bishop David Gitari to be the Church's next Archbishop. Presbyterian Moderator Bernard Muindi finished his final term in 1997, and Jesse Kamau (1997-2003) was elected to follow him. The churches that were friendly to the regime also experienced leadership turnover. Joseph Kyale was succeeded as head of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Kenya by Johnson Othoo. Finally, Moi's relative and friend, Africa Inland Church Bishop Ezekiel Birech, retired and was replaced by Titus Kivunzi (1996-2001).

Despite these changes in leadership, the church structures remained the same and thus reinforced each denomination's previous stance. AIC Bishop Kivunzi continued his predecessor's policy of supporting KANU.<sup>428</sup> Presbyterian Moderator Muindi, outside of his service as a member of the President's devil-worship commission, remained relatively

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also serving at the time as Chairman of the NCCCK); Presbyterian Moderator Jesse Kamau; and Africa Inland Church Bishop Titus Kivunzi.

<sup>427</sup> As noted earlier in this dissertation, Bishop Ndingi clashed with the Kenyatta government over oath-taking in 1969 and, while serving as chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference, the bishop led the early Catholic opposition to queuing in the 1980s.

<sup>428</sup> Maupeu 2001: 61.

quite on political matters, as did the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. On the other hand, Archbishops Ndingi and Gitari were both selected as leaders who would clearly continue their churches' critical stances vis-à-vis the government.<sup>429</sup> The leadership selection procedures of these churches did not lend themselves to easy cooptation. The Catholic Church had adopted a decentralized leadership structure in 1990, making it difficult to coopt the top of the Church. This can be seen in the example given above, in which Moi was able to recruit Archbishop Kirima into a state-sponsored project, only to have Archbishop Ndingi publicly criticize the endeavor. Furthermore, the Catholic bishops had within the Kenya Episcopal Conference a formal process to make decisions through consensus and supermajority vote, and the number of bishops in the country (including the Archbishops) had by 1997 risen to 20, who were spread throughout the country.<sup>430</sup> The number of bishops, as well as the diversity of their own ethnic backgrounds and the areas they represented, made government targeting of the Catholic hierarchy less feasible than for other churches. Similarly, whereas in 1980 Moi's government could influence the Anglican Archbishop's election when there were only seven Anglican dioceses in Kenya, by 1997, there were 20 Anglican bishops representing dioceses throughout the

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<sup>429</sup> These two archbishops were chosen through very different processes, as keeping with the procedures of their respective denominations. Catholic Archbishop Ndingi had been chosen by the Vatican, first appointed coadjutor Archbishop of Nairobi and then replacing Cardinal Otunga as Archbishop of the diocese. Anglican Archbishop Gitari was elected in accordance to the rules of his denomination, in which the Archbishop is elected by a body consisting of three representatives from each diocese – the diocesan bishop, a representative of the clergy, and a lay representative. By the time of Gitari's election, the number of Anglican dioceses in the country had grown to 22.

<sup>430</sup> Data on the founding dates of Catholic dioceses in Kenya drawn from the website "The Hierarchy of the Catholic Church: Current and historical information about its bishops and dioceses," <http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org/country/ke.html>.

country.<sup>431</sup> The proliferation of Anglican dioceses proceeded along largely ethnic lines, increasing the diversity of interests represented by the Anglican electors. These churches therefore did not present themselves as attractive targets for cooptation.

Despite the scandals plaguing his administration and the continued opposition of prominent churches, President Moi again survived the 1997 election with a plurality of the votes cast.<sup>432</sup> This time most of the opposition votes fell to Mwai Kibaki, whose Democratic Party had survived the election cycle. Raila Odinga came in a distant third, and the remnants of the FORD parties failed to make a significant impact in the election. The churches again aligned in the usual way in the 1997 election.

#### ***4.3 Church Involvement in the 2002 Election***

Constitutionally barred from running in the 2002 elections, President Moi's handpicked successor was Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Kenya's founding President. Uhuru was quickly moved up the ranks within the government to position him for his 2002 run. This choice greatly upset a number of senior KANU politicians who had been passed over in favor of Uhuru. These officials, including Raila Odinga (who had only recently joined the ruling government), eventually formed an alliance with a near-unified opposition bloc led by Mwai Kibaki.

Violence accompanied the lead-up to the election. This now included widespread urban clashes involving corrupt police, vigilante groups and criminal gangs. The latter

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<sup>431</sup> Musalia, Martha Wangari. *Archbishop Manasses Kuria: A Biography: Strong in the Storms*. WordAlive Publishers, 2001: 72. At the time of the 1996 Archbishop election, there were 22 Anglican dioceses in the country, but two of them did not have bishops. Mbure, Jeff. "Kenya; Who Will Be Kenya's Next Anglican Archbishop?" *All Africa Press Service*. November 18, 1996.

<sup>432</sup> Branch 2011: 228.

category including a large Kikuyu movement called Mungiki, which mixed Kikuyu nationalism, traditional religious practices and criminal enterprises such as a protection racket for public transportation in Nairobi. This group supported Uhuru's bid for the presidency rather than Kibaki's, and thus Mungiki formed an uneasy understanding with the government that allowed the group to operate with general impunity.<sup>433</sup> The pervasive violence within Kenya touched the churches as well. Father John Kaiser, a Catholic priest from the United States who was active among marginal communities in Kenya, was murdered in 2000.

By this point, the positions of most of the churches had been solidified, with neither the government nor the churches seeking to change the relationships that existed between church and state, and so it is not necessary to detail the churches' stance in great detail. The Anglican and Catholic leaderships continued to be critical of the government and pressed for constitutional reforms ahead of the 2002 elections. President Moi alternatively attempted to stall and control the constitutional review process through the appointment of Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC) and later a Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC). On the same day that the government appointed the PSC, various religious groups expressed their frustration with the review process by launching a rival constitution review group called the Ufungamano Initiative.<sup>434</sup> The Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches were among those supported this initiative. Additionally, Anglican Archbishop David Gitari openly attended opposition events and publicly urged the various opposition parties to coalesce around a single candidate if they

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<sup>433</sup> Branch 2011: 235-242.

<sup>434</sup> Hornsby 2013: 624.



wanted to defeat KANU at the polls.<sup>435</sup> The Catholic Church, and Nairobi Archbishop Ndingi in particular, did not respond to efforts by Mwai Kibaki to win the Church's endorsement.<sup>436</sup> Nevertheless, the Catholic Archbishops and the chair of the Kenya Episcopal Conference offered various criticisms of the government prior to the election.<sup>437</sup> Just as the Anglican and Catholic hierarchies maintained their criticisms of the government, the Africa Inland Church and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church remained supportive. Africa Inland Church Bishop Kivunzi lost his 2001 re-election bid within the church to Silas Yego.<sup>438</sup> Yego was not only a member of Moi's Kalenjin ethnic group, but had also personally supported the candidacy of one of the President's relatives during the 1997 parliamentary elections campaign.<sup>439</sup> Mere weeks after Yego pledged neutrality in the public discussion of who was to succeed President Moi, the Bishop hosted President Moi and Uhuru Kenyatta as guests of honor at an AIC fundraiser, during which the President and presidential nominee helped to raise nearly 10 million shillings for the Church.<sup>440</sup> Despite the national-level AIC leadership supporting KANU, at the local level AIC pastors split their support, with the Kalenjin clergy supporting KANU

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<sup>435</sup> *East African Standard*. September 9, 2002.

<sup>436</sup> Maupeu 2001: 66.

<sup>437</sup> Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth of Kisumu alluded to the problems of failed leadership in the country when urging citizens to register to vote. (*Daily Nation*, February 11, 2002). Archbishop John Njenga of Mombasa, a member of the Ufungamano Initiative, complained of the lack of progress in finding Father Kaiser's killer (*Daily Nation*, November 19, 2000).

<sup>438</sup> *Daily Nation*. November 19, 2001.

<sup>439</sup> Maupeu 2001: 67.

<sup>440</sup> *East African Standard*. September 2, 2002; September 30, 2002.

and the Kamba clerics backing Kibaki's NARC coalition.<sup>441</sup> The Seventh-Day Adventist Church maintained their abstention from direct participation in politics. Locally, SDA members split their allegiance, with some members winning election to parliament under Raila's National Development Party.<sup>442</sup> Nationally, the SDA remained friendly with the Moi government; as late as 1999, an SDA delegation, including the head of the SDA in Kenya, held an hour-long meeting in State House with President Moi.<sup>443</sup>

During the Multi-Party Democracy Era, the structures of the churches remained divergent, with the Catholic and Anglican denominations continuing to have decentralized leadership, while the Africa Inland Church and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church retained their centralized leadership structures. These static internal organizational features coincided with static political stances. The Catholic Church and Anglican Church remained independent of government cooptation and continued their critical stances, while the leaders of the AIC and SDA remained clients and friends with President Moi, even after the identities of the individuals within the top leadership spots of these latter denominations changed. Among the major Kenyan churches, only the Presbyterian Church, which had fallen between these two pairs of denominations in terms of both internal centralization and political opposition, had significant movement in its political stances during the Multiparty Politics Era. Now under the leadership of

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<sup>441</sup> Ibid: 53.

<sup>442</sup> Maupeu, Herve "'Religion and the Elections"' in Maupeu, Herv  , Musambayi Katumanga, and Winnie V. Mitullah, eds. *The Moi Succession: The 2002 Elections in Kenya*. No. 2. Transafrica Press, 2005.  
APA: 41-42

<sup>443</sup> Mhando, Herry "Public Evangelism Still Works (Part 1)." *Ministry: International Journal for Pastors* April 2001.

Moderator Jesse Kamau (1997-2003), the Presbyterian Church took a harder stance against the government than his predecessors, especially after the Saba Saba 1997 incident. Kamau criticized the government on a number of issues, including calling out cabinet ministers for inflaming ethnic violence, and joined other church leaders in pressuring the government to revitalize stalled constitutional reforms ahead of the 2002 election.<sup>444</sup> Even so, it was the decentralized churches that maintained consistent opposition to the government throughout this era.

## 5 Conclusion

In retrospect, it is not surprising that Christian church leaders stood up to oppose the government of President Daniel arap Moi. Given the oppressive nature of his regime and the stark declines in income and rule of law that accompanied Moi's twenty-four year reign, there existed a moral imperative to speak out against the injustices pervading the country. And with secular dissent stifled, clergy were not only morally compelled to speak up, but they were among the few individuals allotted a modicum of civil liberties that allowed them to voice their opinions. The genuine puzzle is that some churches and church leaders spoke against the government while others supported it, and those that opposed Moi varied significantly in the timing and intensity of their critiques. The two prominent existing answers to this puzzle attribute differences in the churches' stances to ethnic differences or variations in theological beliefs. The former view paints the conflict as Moi's Kalenjin and allied ethnic groups clashing with excluded groups led by the Kikuyu. The other view places the churches along a conservative to liberal theological

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<sup>444</sup> *Daily Nation*. January 26, 1998, February 20, 1998.

spectrum, with those on the liberal side exercising a “prophetic” role while the conservative branch saw it as their duty to “submit to governing authorities.”<sup>445</sup> These explanations do not hold up to close examination. Rather, as shown in this chapter, differences in the organizational structure of the churches determined the ability of the churches to negotiate with President Moi and government officials, and affected the ease with which Moi could coopt the churches’ leaders or win the church leaders’ support for the government. Moi’s governing strategies implicitly recognize these mechanisms for securing church support; after initially attempting to maintain relationships with the larger, less centralized and less authoritarian churches, Moi shifts his focus to courting the smaller, more centralized and more authoritarian churches.

This chapter also illustrates how the preferences of churches and government influence church-state relations. Even with the variations in church structure, the various denominations began the Moi era offering uniform support for the new president. At various points, however, Moi chose to pursue policies that accomplished important goals for the President but also negatively impacted the churches’ main goals. Dismissing Charles Njonjo eliminated a potential political rival to Moi, but also contributed to the alienation of the Anglican Archbishop, who had been linked to Njonjo. Implementing a queuing system for elections allowed KANU to more easily manipulate elections in favor of the party leaders’ preferred candidates, but also threatened the operation of churches with politically and ethnically diverse membership. Allowing security forces to violently disrupt the Saba Saba protests of 1997 helped to clamp down on dissent but also served as an affront to the churches that suffered desecrated holy sites and injured clergy. While

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<sup>445</sup> Romans 13:1. New Living Translation.

seeking to portray himself as a devoted Christian and a patron of the churches, Moi chose to focus on the churches that were less expensive to coopt and easier to control.

The churches' activities in the Multi-Party Democracy Era (1992-2002) were largely consistent with their stances in the years leading up to democratization. The Anglican Church, led by David Gitari (who succeeded Manasses Kuria as Archbishop in 1998), remained critical of the government and continued to pressure it to reform. The Catholic bishops did likewise with their Pastoral Letters, while Presbyterian Church offered additional mild criticisms as well. The main difference in this last era was the support given by the Anglican clerics in particular for opposition parties matching their ethnic affiliations, demonstrating that ethnicity was a factor in church opposition, even if not the most important one. The ethnic factor would remain relevant to church political activities during the presidency of Mwai Kibaki, but the structure of the churches and the preferences of both church and state would remain key to understanding church political activity during the rule of Kenya's third president, as analyzed in the next chapter.

## Chapter 4: Church Political Activity During the Kibaki Years: 2002-2012

### 1 Introduction

Mwai Kibaki, former KANU stalwart turned opposition candidate in the early 1990s, finally won the presidency of Kenya in 2002 as the head of a united coalition of opposition parties. In his camp were several recent defectors from the ruling coalition, including Raila Odinga, who had briefly joined his party to the KANU government but then defected to Kibaki's coalition.<sup>446,447</sup> The National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), made up of parties including Kibaki's National Alliance Party of Kenya (NAK) and Raila Odinga's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), easily defeated outgoing President Moi's handpicked-successor, Uhuru Kenyatta.<sup>448</sup> After coming to power in 2002, Kibaki's presidency was marked by three significant, interrelated events: a failed attempt at constitutional reform in 2005, a disputed 2007 presidential election with a tragically violent aftermath, and a successful follow-up constitutional referendum in 2010. The major Christian churches in Kenya, having been highly politicized during the Moi

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<sup>446</sup> Various more established politicians within the ruling coalitions were angry when President Moi passed over them and instead chose Uhuru, a political novice as his handpicked successor for the presidency.

<sup>447</sup> Branch, Daniel. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011*. Yale University Press, 2011: 246-9. Raila (as he is generally called in the Kenyan press to distinguish him from his prominent father, the late Oginga Odinga) and other senior politicians were offended at having been passed over when President Moi, who had been in office for over two decades but was constitutionally barred from running again, handpicked inexperienced politician Uhuru Kenyatta to run for president atop the KANU ticket in 2002.

<sup>448</sup> Kibaki also won every province except Moi's Rift Valley and the small North Eastern Province. Throup, David. "The Kenya General Election: December 27, 2002." *Africa Notes*. No 14. January 2003.

presidency, generally sought to influence the outcome of each of these events, with varying degrees of success.<sup>449</sup>

Throughout his presidency, the Kibaki government sought to maintain friendly, if arms-length, relationships with the churches, and Kibaki attempted to obtain the churches' support ahead of the three votes that defined his presidency. Differences in the internal structures of the churches generally played less of a role in determining church political orientation under Kibaki compared to the Kenyatta and Moi presidencies. During these earlier presidencies, the government was able to secure mutually supportive relationships with churches that had centralized and unaccountable leadership structures, as these internal church organizational features facilitated negotiations between church leaders and the government or allowed the government to more easily coopt top church leaders. In order to distinguish his administration from the corruption and authoritarian tactics of previous presidents, Kibaki implemented various political reforms that were popular domestically and internationally. These reforms paid political dividends but also reduced the government's ability to coopt churches by limiting the government's capabilities for offering financial concessions to supportive church leaders or threatening recalcitrant clergy. Kibaki's reforms and his decentralized, hands-off style of leadership also limited his ability to directly negotiate with church leaders. With the government constrained by its own reforms, the mechanisms by which church structure influenced church political orientation broke down.

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<sup>449</sup> The Seventh-Day Adventist Church's doctrine includes warnings against direct involvement in contentious political matters, and thus generally eschews direct political involvement. Though the SDA was unusually politicized by President Moi, it limited its political engagement during the Kibaki presidency, but did occasionally engage in national political issues.

Without these mechanisms for negotiation or cooptation in place, church-state interactions hinged on the compatibility or the conflict of preferences between the churches and the government. When churches could find common ground with the government, such as collaborating over social services, relations were friendly between the church and the state. On the other hand, the churches and the government disagreed over constitutional reforms that were favored by Kibaki but posed a threat to the churches' goals of maximizing membership and maintaining right beliefs and actions among church members. When the government most needed the active support of the churches, most notably during the 2007 reelection campaign, Kibaki recognized the constraints his government had placed on its own ability to negotiate and coopt, and the government circumvented its own rules in order to coopt church leaders and win church support by reviving tactics used by Kenyatta and Moi.

The following discussions examine the political orientation of the five Kenyan denominations covered in this dissertation during the three major periods of the Kibaki presidency, with each period punctuated by one of the three major events mentioned above. Section 2 covers the early Kibaki years, 2002-2005, especially detailing the churches' roles in the constitution-making process and their actions concerning the national referendum on the 2005 constitution draft. During the lead-up to the 2005 referendum, church-state relations fluctuated, as the government had less tools at its disposal for securing church support. The churches were dissatisfied with the version of the constitution that the government placed before the people in 2005, but their objections were mostly mollified by last-minute negotiations with the government or by pressure from the churches' own members. The final stance of the churches on the proposed



constitution was largely ambivalence. Political disagreements between Kibaki and several major figures within his governing coalition culminated in Raila Odinga leading a massive counter-campaign against the document, causing constitutional reform to fail in the 2005 referendum.

Section 3 examines the stances taken by the churches during the period between the 2005 vote and the 2007 national election, as well as the actions of the churches to address the post-election violence of 2007-2008 that resulted from the dispute election results. The politicians who had led the successful “No” campaign went on to form an official opposition party, headed by Raila, which ran against incumbent President Kibaki in the closely-fought 2007 presidential election. Kibaki had learned from his difficulties in securing church support during the 2005 referendum campaign, and the president responded by adjusting his political style and violating his own government’s rules in order to win church support in 2007. Although President Kibaki was able to gain the support of the top officials of most of the major churches, ethnically motivated splits developed within the less centralized denominations. Kibaki was officially declared the winner of the highly disputed 2007 election, sparking waves of violence between supporters of the two candidates that left over one thousand Kenyans dead and hundreds of thousands displaced.

One of the components of the peace deal was an agreement to revive the constitutional reform process in order to address some of the political grievances that precipitated the violence. Section 4 explores the roles of the churches after the formation of the government of national unity in 2008 through the 2010 constitution draft referendum, during which time the Christian churches in Kenya carried out an

unprecedented campaign urging a “No” vote on the proposed law. The churches were again dissatisfied with the document presented to the Kenyan people in 2010, and this time held a mostly-united front in opposition to the new draft. Despite this opposition, Kibaki, Raila and most of the political elites expressing support for the reforms, as did a majority of Kenya’s citizens. The government thus did not need the backing of the churches, and placed only limited effort in winning over the major denominations. The majority of Kenyans who voted in 2010 approved the new document, over the objections of the churches. Section 5 concludes the chapter, reflecting on the implications of the Kibaki government’s relations with the major Kenyan churches for understanding the roles of church structure and preferences on church-state relations more generally.

## **2 Constitutional Review and Referendum, 2002-2005**

### ***2.1 The Early Kibaki Years, 2002-2004: From Optimism to Scandal***

President Kibaki came into office with a great deal of popular support, having gained over 60% of the popular vote and winning every province except Moi’s Rift Valley and the sparsely populated North Eastern Province.<sup>450</sup> Kibaki’s victory against the ruling party was viewed as a “second liberation,” comparable to the first liberation achieved by Jomo Kenyatta at independence in 1963.<sup>451</sup> Enjoying the acclaim that came with ushering in a new political era, Kibaki engendered additional goodwill by implementing popular policies, such as easing media restrictions, improving health

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<sup>450</sup> Hornsby, Charles. *Kenya: A History Since Independence*. IB Tauris, 2013: 69.

<sup>451</sup> Ranger, Terence O., ed. *Evangelical Christianity and Democracy in Africa*. Oxford University Press, 2008: 235.

services, and offering free primary education to schoolchildren.<sup>452</sup> Kibaki began his term by initiating a fight against corruption, appointing John Githongo to the position of Governance and Ethics Permanent Secretary, reporting directly to the President.<sup>453</sup> To fight the politicization of harambees and their abuse of government funds, Parliament passed legislation such as the Public Officers Ethics Act in 2003, which severely restricted the ability of elected officials to participate in these fundraisers.<sup>454</sup> These policies were not only responses to domestic demand for a fight against corruption, but they also helped Kenya regain international favor from the United States and other sources of external support.<sup>455</sup> At the same time, Kibaki implemented the Constituency Development Fund (CDF), by which a portion of the national budget was allocated to the country's electoral constituencies, to be spent on development work at the discretion of each constituency's Member of Parliament. Together, these reforms decentralized and, in theory, routinized government transfers to local communities.

The turnover in President and ruling party coincided with turnover in leadership within the major churches. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Africa Inland Church and Anglican Church had all recently undergone leadership transitions, with Paul Muasya being appointed Executive Director of the SDA in 2000, Silas Yego elected Bishop of the

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<sup>452</sup> Gifford, Paul. *Christianity, Politics and Public Life in Kenya*. Hurst & Co., 2009: 16-17.

<sup>453</sup> Gifford 2009: 18; Hornsby 2013: 700.

<sup>454</sup> *Daily Nation*. November 12, 2003.

<sup>455</sup> For instance, the 2004 U.S. Department of State "Background Note" for Kenya positively mentions the Public Officers Ethics Act, along with the country's Anti-Corruption and Economic Crimes Act, as steps taken to fight corruption. <http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/kenya/40620.htm>. Accessed May 20, 2014.

AIC in 2001 and Benjamin Nzimbi was chosen as the new Anglican Archbishop in 2002. Shortly after Kibaki took power, David Githii was elected Moderator of the Presbyterian Church, a position he would use to carry out personal moral crusades over the next six years.<sup>456</sup> While the four Catholic Archbishops had all been in office for several years before Kibaki took power and would remain so for several years after, the chairmanship of the Kenya Episcopal Conference passed from Bishop John Njue to Bishop Cornelius Korir. Table 4.1 lists the leaders of these denominations during the Kibaki presidency.

The leaders of the major churches were generally receptive of the new President and his initiatives. Observers within Kenya considered the Catholic Church, to which Kibaki and his initial Vice-President, Michael Wamalwa, belonged, as particularly close to the new government.<sup>457</sup> The leaders of the Catholic Church in Kenya were mostly positive toward the new government and its anti-corruption agenda.<sup>458</sup> Other church

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<sup>456</sup> Githii would stand out as the most controversial leader of the Kenyan Presbyterian Church's history. Githii became convinced that various buildings and names within Kenyan society, including the Presbyterian Church, had pagan, Freemason or satanic origins, and he spent most of his term as Moderator carrying out a rather idiosyncratic crusade to rid the government and the Presbyterian Church of what he considered to be pagan and satanic symbols. For example, he claimed that the term harambee was derived from the name of a Hindu goddess, and that Jitemege, the Presbyterian Church's motto of "self-reliance", was similarly unchristian. Branch 2011:257; *Daily Nation*. December 8, 2004.

<sup>457</sup> *Daily Nation*. September 7, 2003.

<sup>458</sup> Catholic Bishop Cornelius Korir of Eldoret Diocese, the chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference (2003-2006) was initially supportive of Kibaki's anti-corruption plans (*Daily Nation*. November 7, 2003). Archbishop John Njenga of Mombasa similarly supported the war on corruption, though he did find fault in the government's use of official funds to finance a ruling party member's by-election campaign (*Daily Nation*. April 14, 2003). Catholic Archbishop Raphael Ndingi, who had maintained contentious relationships with both the Kenyatta and Moi governments, publicly prayed for Kibaki's health and for the new government, referencing both a car crash that had seriously injured Kibaki just prior to the 2002 election and a January 2003 plane crash that killed a

<b>Table 4.1: Church Leaders During Kibaki Presidency</b>				
Church Name	Highest National Church Office(s)	Officeholder	Term	Ethnic Group/ Nationality
Anglican	Archbishop of Nairobi	Benjamin Nzimbi	2002-2009	Kamba
		Eliud Wabukala	2009-	Luhya
Presbyterian	Moderator	Jesse Macharia Kamau	1997-2003	GEMA
		David Githii	2003-2009	GEMA
		David R. Gathanju	2009-	GEMA
Africa Inland Church	Bishop/Presiding Bishop	Silas Yego	2001-	Kalenjin
Seventh-Day Adventist	Executive Director	Musyoka Paul Muasya	2000-	Kamba?
Catholic	Archbishop of Nairobi	Raphael S. Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki	1997-2007	Kamba
		John Njue	2007-	GEMA
	Archbishop of Kisumu	Zacchaeus Okoth	1978-	Luo
	Archbishop of Mombasa	John Njenga	1988-2005	GEMA
		Boniface Lele	2005-	Kamba
	Archbishop of Nyeri	Nicodemus Kirima	1988-2007	GEMA
		Peter J. Kairo	2008-	
	Kenya Episcopal Conference Chairman	John Njue	1997-2003	GEMA
		Cornelius Kipng'eno Arap Korir	2003-2006	Kalenjin
		John Njue	2006-	GEMA

leaders welcomed President Kibaki as well. Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi attended an inter-denominational prayer service with Catholic Archbishop Ndingi in 2003 to publicly

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government minister (*East African Standard*. January 27, 2003; Hornsby 2013). Archbishops Zacchaeus Okoth of Kisumu was initially quiet on political issues during this early phase, as was Nicodemus Kirima of Nyeri; the latter's silence can be attributed to serious health issues that plagued the Archbishop from 2002 until his death in 2007. "Kenyan archbishop dies aged 71" (*Catholic Herald*. November 30, 2007).

pray for the president's health after a recent car accident. Vice-President Michael Wamalwa represented the President by giving opening remarks during the Presbyterian Church's triennial General Assembly meeting in April 2003. During this meeting, which presented Reverend David Githii as the new Moderator of the Church, Wamalwa announced specific policies that would increase cooperation between the Church and state in education and healthcare, and Githii pledged to retain a critical stance to make sure the new government delivered on its promises.<sup>463</sup> Initially, this critical stance would only manifest itself in mild disagreements between Githii and the government over issues such as the dismantling of small vendor kiosks in Nairobi or private meetings between Kibaki and former President Moi at State House.<sup>464</sup> President Kibaki personally welcomed such "constructive criticism" during his address later that year at the opening of new headquarters for the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK). Addressing a group that included NCCCK officials and Catholic Archbishop Ndingi, Kibaki pledged a sharp break from the hostile relationship between the previous KANU government and various church leaders, promising church-state cooperation in development, anti-corruption measures, national reconciliation, and the fight against HIV/AIDS.<sup>465</sup> Jan Paulsen, global President of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, paid a courtesy call to President Kibaki in November 2003, at which time the Kenyan President hailed the SDA Church for its work fighting HIV/AIDS in Kenya.<sup>466</sup> For the

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<sup>463</sup> *Daily Nation*. April 23, 2003.

<sup>464</sup> *Daily Nation*. July 25, 2003; November 4, 2003.

<sup>465</sup> *Daily Nation*. November 20, 2003.

<sup>466</sup> "Kibaki lauds Church for fighting HIV/AIDS" November 12, 2003. <http://www.statehousekenya.go.ke/news/nov03/2003121101.htm>

most part, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church withdrew from political life in Kenya, reverting to that denomination's usual abstention from politics.<sup>467</sup> Bishop Silas Yego of the Africa Inland Church, who had been a strong supporter and confidant of President Moi, also largely withdrew from public political life once Kibaki came to power. Although the AIC and SDA were the quietest churches during this time period, all the major denominations largely stepped back from politics once Kibaki came into power, especially when compared to the politically polarized church activities of the Moi era.

The early achievements of the Kibaki government soon gave way to disappointments and scandal. John Githongo's anti-corruption investigations led him to discover various fraudulent dealings involving government officials. The largest scheme, on par with the Goldenberg affair of the previous administration, involved questionable contracts worth tens of billions of shillings that had been made by both the Moi and Kibaki governments with a British company called Anglo-Leasing. Githongo's digging uncovered that there were questions concerning the company's very existence, and that funds involved were being secretly diverted by government ministers close to the President in order to fund the government's upcoming re-election campaign.<sup>468</sup> Anglo-Leasing became a major scandal when details of the fraud were made public in 2004,

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<sup>467</sup> The only major statement from the SDA during this time period was a strongly worded statement criticizing a government minister for proposing to extend the workweek to include Saturdays, which the Seventh-Day Adventists characterized as an attack on their religious freedom, since Seventh-Day Adventists strictly adhere to a Saturday Sabbath.

<sup>468</sup> Hornsby 2013: 726-727.

becoming a symbol of endemic corruption within the Kibaki government and a failure of the new president's anti-corruption agenda.<sup>469</sup>

With the churches neither having close dialogue with the government nor enjoying relationships of cooptation, the leaders of the major denominations were free to chastise the government when their own morality and the anger of their parishioners called for such criticism. Calls for the accused government ministers to be fired or prosecuted came from a number of church leaders, including Kenya Episcopal Conference Chairman Korir, Catholic Archbishop Njue and Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi.<sup>470</sup> Presbyterian Moderator David Githii questioned the government's commitment to an anti-corruption agenda in the context of a report that Kibaki had privately met with former president Moi, arguing that the former President represented an agenda of corruption and poor governance.<sup>471</sup> The Seventh-Day Adventist Church and the Africa Inland Church remained reticent during this time period.<sup>472</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> With half of Kibaki's cabinet under suspicion of corruption connected to Anglo Leasing or other schemes, Githongo feared that he would be fired or killed, and he chose to resign and go into exile after exposing the deep-seated corruption within the Kenyan government. Hornsby 2013: 726-7.

<sup>470</sup> *East African Standard*. July 13, 2004, July 16, 2004; *The Guardian (London)*. July 16, 2004.

<sup>471</sup> *Daily Nation*. November 4, 2003.

<sup>472</sup> Later in Kibaki's first term, the SDA eventually called for the accused government officials to step aside "House May Form Committee to Probe Scandal, Says Ex-Minister" *Daily Nation*. January 25, 2006.



## ***2.2 Government Constraints, Incompatible Preferences, and the Limits of Structure***

Unlike previous eras, variations in church political stances toward the Kibaki government generally did not correlate with internal church structure, as churches with centralized and relatively unaccountable leaders were not more supportive of the government than those with decentralized leadership or internal accountability mechanisms. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church and the Africa Inland Church maintained the centralized and relatively unaccountable leadership structures that they had during the Moi era. The SDA in Kenya continued to be led by a single Executive Director who was appointed from above by the denomination's international hierarchy, rather than being chosen locally.<sup>473</sup> The Presiding Bishop of the AIC was chosen from within the denomination and faced elections every five years. However, the leadership of incumbent Presiding Bishop Silas Yego, in office since 2001, has been marked by accusations of manipulating the Church's electoral rules and silencing of the Bishop's critics and rivals within the denomination.<sup>474</sup> These two churches withdrew from politics during the early Kibaki years. The Presbyterian Church also concentrated executive authority in a single individual, but the Presbyterian Moderator faced regular elections every three years and a two-term limit. The Moderator's relationship with the new government was mixed, as he was generally cordial with the Kibaki government but was

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<sup>473</sup> Paul Muasya, Executive Director of the East African Union of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. Interview by author. November 13, 2009.

<sup>474</sup> Controversies within the Africa Inland Church concerning Yego's leadership have been reported in the Kenyan press. "Moi in Bid to Reconcile Church Leaders." *Daily Nation*. April 7, 2005; "I Won't Resign, Church Leader Tells His Critics." *Daily Nation*. February 24, 2006; "Pastors Want Yego Barred From Running Church." *East African Standard*. December 12, 2006; "Yego to Remain Aic Head As Solution to Row Sought." *Daily Nation*. March 22, 2008.

willing to question the President on some issues, such as rumored private meetings between Kibaki and former President Moi.<sup>475</sup> Meanwhile, the less centralized Catholic Church, with its four Archbishops and Episcopal Conference President, were publicly supportive of Kibaki, outside of critical comments relating to the corruption scandals. The Anglican Church, which maintained a federated structure in which individual bishops maintained a fair degree of autonomy from the Church's Archbishop, was also critical of corruption within the government but otherwise publicly friendly with Kibaki.<sup>476</sup>

The correlation between church structure and church political stances did not hold for most of the Kibaki presidency for two reasons, both of which are consistent with the analysis of church political orientation presented in this dissertation. First, the Kibaki government generally did not need the political backing of the more centralized churches, and thus did relatively little to secure their support. As discussed in previous chapters, government preferences vis-à-vis churches mainly fall into three categories: churches can provide governments with citizen mobilization, ideological support, and social service provision. Of the three church “products,” Kibaki initially only sought cooperation with the churches over services, as the churches were able to provide useful resources in a

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<sup>475</sup> *Daily Nation*. November 4, 2003.

<sup>476</sup> A telling example of the churches' stances comes in the form of an article published in late December 2004 in the *Daily Nation* newspaper, evaluating President Kibaki's leadership style. When asked for remarks, both Catholic Archbishop Ndingi and Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi decline to comment and implicitly defend the President against criticisms, while Presbyterian Moderator Githii gives a balanced statement, praising the President's ability to delegate while criticizing him for moving too slowly on some issues. The leaders of the AIC and SDA churches are not cited in article. “How Leaders Rate Kibaki for His Style And Ability” *Daily Nation*. December 26, 2004.

number of areas. The churches welcomed the offers of government resources and coordination to complement their own work and were happy to work with the government in service provision. Kibaki had pledged improvements in education as one of his main campaign promises.<sup>477</sup> The churches, finding education provision useful for gaining new members and training existing members to be more knowledgeable and faithful Christians, remained heavily involved in education at all levels, including higher education, with all the major churches in this dissertation operating universities in Kenya.<sup>478</sup> The churches and government similarly cooperated in healthcare and relief work. The Catholic, Anglican and Presbyterian churches consulted with the Ministry of Health on a new anti-AIDS initiatives, and the President congratulated the Seventh-Day Adventist Church for its HIV/AIDS work in Kenya as well.<sup>479</sup> The Catholic Church alone was running more than 700 AIDS related projects in Kenya by 2006, primarily funded from abroad.<sup>480</sup> In the face of a serious famine threat in 2004, the Catholic Church

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<sup>477</sup> Mathooko, Mbatha. "Actualizing Free Primary Education in Kenya for Sustainable Development." *The Journal of Pan African Studies* 2.8 (2009): 151-159.

<sup>478</sup> These universities include the Catholic University of East Africa, the Presbyterian University of East Africa, and Baraton University, the Seventh-Day Adventist institution founded under the patronage of then-President Moi (Gifford 2009b: 46). Moi also founded Kabarak University, which catered to Africa Inland Church clergy as well as secular education. Kigotho, Wachira. "Arap Moi Sets Up Private College." *The Times Higher Education* Supplement. November 3, 2000. The Anglican Church has a 50% share in governing the ecumenical St. Paul's University ("Our History" <http://www.spu.ac.ke/home/spu.html>.)

<sup>479</sup> "Catholics Firm Over Condoms" *Daily Nation*. March 25, 2004. "Anglican Faithful Plan New Aids Curriculum" *Daily Nation*. March 26, 2003. "PCEA Rejects Condom Use" *Daily Nation*. March 29, 2003. "Kenya President Commends Adventist Church" *Adventist Review*. 2003.

<sup>480</sup> Gifford 2009b: 47.

teamed with various government agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide relief to the affected areas.<sup>481</sup> The largest Christian denominations were especially useful collaborators for the government due to these churches' connections to international partners, such as church-sponsored development agencies, missionary groups, and parent or sister denominations in western nations. These connections brought significant financial resources into Kenya, as well as human resources in the form of missionaries.<sup>482</sup>

The Kibaki government initially had little demand for the other two church "products." Kibaki's recent landslide election meant that the new president did not immediately need to mobilize voters again. The President's evident popularity and reputation as a democratizer provided the legitimacy he needed to engender voluntary compliance from the population, obviating the need for ideological support from the church.<sup>483</sup> Thus, while the government collaborated with the government for non-partisan service and development work, Kibaki did not put much effort into securing the political support of the churches at a time when he could maintain adequate public support through secular means. Much like President Jomo Kenyatta, Kibaki's initial

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<sup>481</sup> "Agencies Ready to Respond to Food Crisis" *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. July 27, 2004.

<sup>482</sup> Gifford 2009b: 48-54, 63-70.

<sup>483</sup> According to the "two-turnover" test of democratic consolidation, one prerequisite for determining democratic consolidation is for an initial ruling party to lose an election and voluntarily hand over power to the winning party. Kibaki's victory in 2002 thus marked an important step along the democratization process in Kenya, and was viewed as such both domestically and internationally. Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1993: 266-67; Bratton, Michael. "Second Elections in Africa." *Journal of Democracy* 9.3 (1998): 51-66.

interactions promoted cooperation in areas such as health and education coupled with a separation of church and politics.

In addition to the government expressing little demand for political support from the churches, the second reason why church structure did not correlate with church political orientation during the Kibaki presidency is that the government was also constrained in its ability to secure such support through the usual channels of negotiation or cooptation. The President's strategy for retaining popularity and compliance from the population was to continue in his role as a reformer, as was evidenced by the policies mentioned earlier. These policies made him popular locally as well as satisfying international donors, whose support was also greatly welcomed by the government. The same policies had the additional effect, however, of tying the government's hand in dealing with civil society actors such as the churches. Presidents Kenyatta and Moi had used appearances at harambees, in person or through their top advisors, as important opportunities for transferring resources to the churches and thus influencing the churches' leaders to support the government. Harambees had become highly politicized and coercive, however, such that the public approval that Kibaki gained by restricting the politicization of these fundraisers through the Public Officers Ethics Act initially outweighed the costs of losing the ability to use harambees as a tool of social control. Additionally, the Kibaki government's Constituency Development Fund placed control of development funds in the hands of individual MPs, shifting the focus of organizations seeking funding (such as churches) from the national level to the constituency level.<sup>484</sup>

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<sup>484</sup> For example, this devolution of development funding caused the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya to introduce a degree of devolution to its own organizational structure in order

Through these reforms, the government lost much of its ability to channel resources to churches and church leaders. Similarly, the government's commitment to respecting civil liberties also eliminated any explicit or implied threat to church leaders' safety and security should they choose to disagree with the government. The government's early commitment to reforms thus bore political dividends, but at the expense of depriving it of the tools necessary for cooptation. Thus, while more centralized churches remained easier to coopt in theory, the government had neither the will nor the ability to channel patronage to these churches' leaders.

While these reforms limited the government's ability to use cooptation to gain church support, other features of the Kibaki government hampered its ability to gain support through negotiations with church leaders. President Kibaki's health was poor for most of 2003 due to his recent car accident and subsequent stroke, leaving him largely unable to handle government affairs personally and leaving his ministers to administer the country in an uncoordinated fashion.<sup>485</sup> The president was thus unable to personally foster relationships with church leaders to the extent that his predecessors had done, although he remained close to a few church allies such as Catholic Archbishop Ndingi, who was vocal in defending the President against critics.<sup>486</sup> Even after his health

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to better access funds at the constituency level. Dr. Wellington Mutiso, General Secretary, Evangelical Alliance of Kenya. Interview with author. November 25, 2009.

<sup>485</sup> Hornsby 2013: 700-701.

<sup>486</sup> Kibaki and Ndingi had reportedly become acquainted during their shared opposition to the abuses of the Moi government in the 1990s, and Kibaki had even helped purchase a car for the Archbishop during this period. Early in his presidency, Kibaki reportedly received Archbishop Ndingi at State House regularly. "Kibaki Leaves it Up to the Archbishop" *The Indian Ocean Newsletter*. September 13, 2003; "Ndingi's Long Walk to the Pulpit" *East African Standard*. April 1, 2007. When Kibaki was in the hospital

recovered, Kibaki's hands-off leadership style, in which he left much of governing to his ministers, was not conducive to the kinds of top-level negotiations that occurred between church leaders and previous presidents.<sup>487</sup> In sum, the governance style and various policies of the Kibaki government, chosen by the government for the purposes of garnering votes, maintaining goodwill domestically and gaining support from international corners, had the side effect of limiting the government's abilities to negotiate with church leaders or to coopt them through either benefits or threats. The mechanisms by which church structure previously influenced church political stances thus broke down. The government, having won the popular vote in a landslide and continuing to enjoy the goodwill of the population and international community, did not have much demand for churches' ideological or mobilization goods and thus was willing to give up the tools for influencing public church support by implementing these policies.

Absent the mechanisms by which internal church structure affected church-state interactions and ultimately influenced church political positions, other considerations drove churches' political stances. Recall that a church's organizational preferences are to maximize membership of the denominations, maximize the degree to which members conform to their denomination's beliefs and prescribed practices, and maximize the amount of resources at the denomination's disposal. In addition to the organizational

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following his 2002 car crash, Archbishop Ndingi was one of his visitors. "Kibaki Flown to London" *Daily Nation*. December 5, 2002. During Kibaki's first term in office, Archbishop Ndingi remained close to the President and publicly defended him Kibaki in the press. "Archbishop Ndingi: Don't Exert Pressure On Kibaki" *East Africa Standard*. September 14, 2003.

<sup>487</sup> Hornsby 2013: 701-702. Gifford (2009b) refers to Kibaki's leadership style as "benevolent detachment" and cites the President's age and poor state of health as contributing factors to his hands off approach (17).

preferences of churches, church leaders also have preferences for securing personal resources, gaining prestige and acting in ways that are consistent with their own beliefs and morality. The government's ability to provide the churches with resources was largely limited to collaboration in social services and development work, as other avenues of patronage had been blocked by Kibaki's reforms, and the government's lack of demand for active political support from the churches left little motivation to provide such patronage. While the churches and church leaders therefore did not particularly benefit financially from having Kibaki in office, neither did the new president implement policies that were particularly onerous for churches or their leaders. President Kibaki was a Catholic in apparent good standing with his church, and his policies and public behavior did not present any immediate threat to churches' goals of maximizing members. Nor did the government's policies contradict the teachings of the churches, and thus the government posed no initial threat to the churches' goals of maintaining right beliefs and actions among church members. Kibaki's public persona and religious bona fides did not present any obvious moral challenges that would cause church leaders to oppose the president. The public interactions that took place between church leaders and government officials, often connected to collaborations over social services or development projects, were generally positive, and thus did not threaten the prestige of church leaders, even those such as AIC Bishop Silas Yego who had not supported Kibaki's 2002 presidential run.<sup>488</sup> Given Kibaki's initial popularity, associating with the President was generally a way for church leaders to boost their prestige.

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<sup>488</sup> During the 2002 presidential campaign, Bishop Yego hosted outgoing President Moi and his chosen successor, Uhuru Kenyatta, at a major AIC fundraiser (*East African Standard*. September 30, 2002).



The churches therefore had no initial reason to oppose the new president, even though the government did not provide many specific incentives to churches to provide active political support. Thus, initial relations between the churches and the state ranged from neutral to supportive. The early variation in church-state relations across the different denominations reflected the alliances that had formed under the Moi administration. The Catholic and Anglican Churches had strongly opposed Moi and now welcomed Kibaki, their erstwhile opposition ally, once the NARC leader assumed the presidency.<sup>489</sup> These two churches were also the largest and most widespread in Kenya, and thus found the greatest opportunities to collaborate on social service provision, which further promoted good relations between the government and the Catholic and Anglican denominations. The Africa Inland Church and Seventh-Day Adventist Church were relatively smaller and more geographically concentrated in certain regions of the country, and though they also worked with the government, they had less to offer than their Catholic and Anglican counterparts. The AIC and SDA had also long offered vocal support for President Moi, limiting the ability of these churches' leaders to attempt to gain prestige by switching their political backing to Kibaki so soon after having opposed him.<sup>490</sup> These two denominations thus largely faded into the background once Kibaki took power. The Presbyterian Church remained in the middle politically. While

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<sup>489</sup> The Catholic Church of Kenya split national power between four archdioceses and the chairman of the Episcopal Conference. The Anglican Church, while only having one national leader, the Anglican Archbishop of Nairobi, maintained significant autonomy for its dioceses, which had expanded to 28 by 2003.

<sup>490</sup> Gill (2008) discusses the danger of loss of credibility that a church and its leaders face from quickly switching political affiliation. Gill, Anthony James. *The Political Origins of Religious Liberty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008: 54.

associating with the Kikuyu President Kibaki was popular among the Kikuyu-dominated Presbyterian membership, the Presbyterian Moderator David Githii was unusually preoccupied with idiosyncratic moral concerns, including a personal crusade to rid both government facilities and his own church of “Satanic” symbols, which kept his relationship with the government at arms length.<sup>491</sup> Once Kibaki’s image as a reformer was shattered by the revelations of Anglo Leasing and other scandals, church leaders had moral justification to criticize the government’s failings, and public relations incentives to protect their own prestige by distancing themselves and their churches from the corrupt government. The government, having failed to develop relationships of negotiation or cooptation with the churches, was unable to prevent such church criticisms from being publicly expressed.

### ***2.3 Failed Constitutional Reform, 2004-2005***

Much like Kibaki’s failure to stamp out corruption, his pledge to accomplish quick constitutional reform also failed to materialize. In the run-up to the 2002 vote, candidate Mwai Kibaki had promised to have a new constitution within the first 100 days of his presidency, but the National Constitutional Conference (NCC) began its work in late April 2003, nearly four months after Kibaki took office.<sup>492</sup> The NCC, colloquially known as “Bomas” after the name of the resort where the meetings took place, included over 600 delegates, including all 210 elected members of parliament, as well as representatives from districts, political parties, and civil society groups. During stalled

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<sup>491</sup> “Now Cleric Wants Parliament Symbols Destroyed.” *East African Standard*. February 7, 2006.

<sup>492</sup> Cottrell, Jill, and Yash Ghai. "Constitution making and democratization in Kenya (2000–2005)." *Democratisation* 14.1 (2007): 11-12.

constitutional review process of the later Moi years, a collection of religious groups – including the major Christian churches as well as Hindu and Muslim organizations – had launched a parallel, “people driven” review process known as the Ufungamano Initiative.<sup>493</sup> Various religious groups from the Ufungamano Initiative participated in Bomas. Representatives from the major churches included Catholic Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth, retired Anglican Archbishop David Gitari and Seventh-Day Adventist Executive Secretary Peter Bwana.<sup>494</sup>

Bomas became a battleground for a major political conflict brewing within the ruling coalition. During the 2002 presidential campaign, Kibaki had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with various ruling-coalition defectors such as Raila Odinga and his Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Although the details remained in dispute, Kibaki apparently promised these allies a significant share of cabinet seats and other inducements.<sup>495</sup> Most importantly, Raila was told that an executive Prime Minister position would be created for him, and Kibaki allegedly agreed to only serve one term, presumably to open the door for Raila or another coalition member to succeed him in 2007.<sup>496</sup> Once in office, Kibaki reneged on these promises, giving his own NAK party

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<sup>493</sup> The Ufungamano Initiative, named after a facility in Nairobi jointly owned by the Catholic Church and the NCKK, two of the major organizations involved in the new initiative.

<sup>494</sup> Constitution of Kenya Review Commission (CKRC). National Constitutional Conference. Verbatim Report of Swearing in of Delegates to the National Constitutional Conferences, Held at the Bomas of Kenya on 29<sup>th</sup> April 2003.”

<sup>495</sup> Hornsby 2013: 698-699.

<sup>496</sup> Khamisi, Joe. *The Politics of Betrayal: Diary of a Kenyan Legislator*. Trafford Publishing, 2011: 48-50.

members a greater share of cabinet seats than called for in the agreement.<sup>497</sup> The lack of unity within the NARC coalition grew throughout 2003 and 2004, with Raila's LDP essentially becoming an opposition party within the ruling coalition.<sup>498</sup> The Catholic bishops criticized the inter-party squabbling within government and called for the various factions to cooperate on constitutional reform.<sup>499</sup> Presbyterian Moderator Githii similarly criticized the political infighting as a distraction from development work.<sup>500</sup> Instead of simply criticizing, however, Catholic Archbishop Ndingi and Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi, together with NCKK head Mutava Musyimi, personally intervened in an attempt to reconcile the opposing factions.<sup>501</sup>

The church leaders' intervention did not solve the problems within NARC, as the battles between Kibaki's NAK party and Raila's LDP carried over into the constitution-writing process. By allying with KANU (now an official opposition party) and various civil society groups who were represented at the NCC, Raila's group was able to assemble a majority of the delegates to write a new constitution in line with the LDP's vision for government, which included a four-tier devolution of governing authority, a

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<sup>497</sup> Hornsby 2013: 698-699.

<sup>498</sup> Ibid: 720-721.

<sup>499</sup> *East African Standard*. November 26, 2003.

<sup>500</sup> *Daily Nation*. May 3, 2004.

<sup>501</sup> *East African Standard*. June 13, 2004; *Daily Nation*. June 16, 2004.

weakened presidency, and a powerful Prime Minister.<sup>502</sup> The NAK faction, in contrast, sought to retain a strong, centralized presidential system.

The churches were active within the NCC while also maintaining their separate identity as the Ufungamano Initiative. Though initially including Hindu and Muslim groups as well as Christian churches, the churches dominated the Ufungamano group. The Christian groups within Ufungamano strongly objected to a provision within the constitution concerning Islamic “kadhis’ ” courts. These courts, which had authority to handle a limited number of family law cases between willing Muslim parties according to Islamic law, had existed in Muslim-populated areas of Kenya since colonial times, primarily along the coast. Kadhis’ courts had been explicitly included in the independence constitution, but the churches wanted them removed from the new constitution. The churches’ stand against kadhis’ courts caused the major Muslim participants within the Ufungamano Initiative to withdraw from the group.<sup>503</sup> The Ufungamano group also supported the strong presidential system advocated by NAK.

When it became evident in early 2004 that the LDP recommendations were gaining ground at the NCC, the Ufungamano Initiative submitted its own draft constitution for consideration at Bomas, retaining the strong presidency while excluding the office of Prime Minister, devolution, and kadhis’ courts.<sup>504</sup> The leaders of the

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<sup>502</sup> Raila calculated that his best chance of gaining power in the next election was through a parliamentary system (Cattrell and Ghai 2007: 12-13, 24 endnote 17).

<sup>503</sup> *Daily Nation*. April 23, 2003.

<sup>504</sup> The level of agreement between the Ufungamano Draft and the government’s positions led some within Raila’s camp to accuse the churches of working for Kibaki’s NAK party in an attempt to derail the review process “Is NAK Using Ufungamano to Derail Bomas?” *East African Standard*. January 19, 2004.

Anglican and Presbyterian denominations, as well as the chairman of the NCKK, strongly pushed for the Ufungamano constitution, but to little success. The LDP, its allies, and chairman Ghai all reacted unfavorably to the Ufungamano draft, and even the Catholic Church distanced itself from the proposal, despite individual clerics like Catholic Archbishops Ndingi and Njue backing the Ufungamano push. By the time Bomas concluded in March 2004, Raila's group had won out against the preferences of the NAK government and the Protestant churches, completing a "Bomas Draft" constitution incorporating the devolution and other reforms sought by the LDK group.<sup>505</sup>

Though the CKRC succeeded in creating a people-driven draft, the new Kibaki administration was as keen as the previous government on controlling the constitution-writing process. After a stall in the process due to various court challenges, Kenyan court system. the NAK-dominated government passed legislation allowing the draft to be altered through a simple majority process in parliament.<sup>506</sup> Using this power, Kibaki's allies rewrote the document, and the new Wako Draft, named after Attorney General Amos Wako, was approved by parliament and presented to the country for a referendum in November 2005. The new draft limited devolution, retained a strong presidency and created a weak prime minister who was dependent on the president. Many Kenyan citizens and civil society members were outraged at this hijacking of the process, decrying the substitution of a government-drafted document instead of the people's draft

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<sup>505</sup> Cottrell and Ghai 2007: 11-12.

<sup>506</sup> Ironically, one of the major court cases was filed by a group of clergy lead by Reverend Timothy Njoya, the cleric who had consistently pushed for major political reforms in the 1990s, to the chagrin of then-President Moi.

that was created at Bomas. Raila and other disenchanted coalition members, joining with opposition forces such as Uhuru Kenyatta's KANU, began openly campaigning against the proposed government draft. The two camps adopted the names of the images that had been selected to appear on ballots as symbols of the two choices during the referendum: a Banana for President Kibaki and his government pushing for a "Yes" vote on the proposed constitution, and an Orange for Raila and the other politicians campaigning for a "No" vote.

Though it would be an oversimplification to view the referendum results solely in terms of ethnicity, it is undeniable that the ethnic factor played a large role in Kenyans' votes. The "Yes" campaign was identified with President Kibaki's Kikuyu/GEMA ethnic voting bloc,<sup>507</sup> though Uhuru Kenyatta's sided with the No team, threatening to split the Kikuyu vote. Joining Kibaki on the "Yes" side was Simeon Nyachae, a cabinet minister and "big man" of the Kisii ethnic group in the western part of the country.<sup>508</sup> Of the largest remaining ethnic groups – Luo, Luhya, Kamba and Kalenjin– most of the big men (and women) either identified with the "No" campaign or split between the two sides, as shown in Table 4.3.<sup>509</sup>

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<sup>507</sup> GEMA consists of the K(G)ikuyu ethnic group, who predominately hail from Central Province, as well as the related Embu and Meru who live in eponymous districts in neighboring Eastern Province.

<sup>508</sup> Whitake, Beth Elise and Jason Giersch. "Voting on a Constitution: Implications for Democracy in Kenya" *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*. Vol. 27, No. 1, January 2009: 1-20.

<sup>509</sup> Raila Odinga, the leader of the "No" campaign, has long been the undisputed godfather of the Luo. The Kalenjin still largely followed the lead of former President Daniel arap Moi, who spoke out against the proposed constitution and was thought to be funding the "No" campaign (Whitake and Giersch 2009: 10). Also on the Orange side was William Ruto, KANU secretary-general at the time, who was emerging as Moi's

Initially, a large cross section of churches, including the Catholic Kenya Episcopal Conference, NCKK, and EFK, banded together to oppose the Wako Draft. Under an umbrella organization simply called the Kenya Church, the churches mainly took issues with the retention of kadhis' courts in the government's draft. While mainline churches and their leaders, such as Moderator Githii of the Presbyterian Church, were prominent in the Kenya Church opposition movement, the leaders of smaller but well-known and media-savvy evangelical churches also featured prominently in the opposition. These included Bishop Mark Kariuki of the Deliverance Church and Bishop Margaret Wanjiru of Jesus is Alive Ministries, which have been two of the fastest-growing denominations in 21<sup>st</sup> century Kenya.<sup>510</sup>

Facing both secular and religious opposition, Kibaki sought to come to terms with the churches. After an inconclusive meeting between government officials and leaders from both the mainstream churches – including Archbishop Nzimbi and Moderator Githii – and evangelicals Kariuki and Wanjiru, the government chose to lobby

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heir-apparent for Kalenjin leadership. The Luhya leadership split loyalties, with Vice President Moody Awori siding with Kibaki and Musalia Mudavadi, a former Vice President, joining the “No” group. A similar split emerged in the Kamba leadership between government minister Charity Ngilu, who remained loyal to Kibaki, and fellow minister Kalonzo Musyoka, who broke with his boss to support Raila's side (Whitake and Giersch 2009: 10-11).

<sup>510</sup> Karanja, John. "Evangelical Attitudes Towards Democracy in Kenya." *Evangelical Christianity and democracy in Africa* (2008): 89.



<b>Table 4.2: Prominent Political Leaders Positions on 2005 Referendum<sup>1</sup></b>				
Ethnicity	Yes ("Banana") Activist	Office or Position	No ("Orange") Activist	Office or Position
GEMA	Mwai Kibaki	President of Kenya	Uhuru Kenyatta	KANU Chairman
Luo	Raphael Tuju	Information Minister of Kenya	Raila Odinga	Roads Minister of Kenya
Luhya	Moody Awori	Vice President of Kenya	Musalia Mudavadi	Former Vice President of Kenya
Kamba	Charity Ngilu	Health Minister of Kenya	Kalonzo Musyoka	Environment Minister of Kenya
Kalenjin			Daniel arap Moi  William Ruto	Former President of Kenya KANU Secretary- General
Gusii	Simeon Nyachae	Energy Minister of Kenya		

<sup>1</sup> Information drawn from Whitake, Beth Elise and Jason Giersch. "Voting on a Constitution: Implications for Democracy in Kenya", as well as *Daily Nation* and *East African Standard* newspapers.

the largest churches, sending Attorney General Wako to make the government's case before the archbishops and bishops of the Catholic Church, the Anglican Archbishop and bishops, and the leadership of the NCKK on consecutive days between August 30 and September 1, 2005.<sup>511</sup>

After each of these meetings, the targeted church organization softened its "No" stance. The Catholic Church had been wary of the document due to the kadhis' courts, as well as language that the Church worried might allow abortion. After all the Catholic

<sup>511</sup> "Churches to State Stand Tomorrow" *East African Standard*; August 24, 2005. "Catholic Bishops Won't Tell Kenyans How to Vote" *East African Standard*. August 31, 2005; "Referendum: It is All Up to You, Anglican Bishops Tell Their Flock" *Daily Nation*. September 1, 2005; "NCKK Position Echoes Fellow Christian Churches" *East African Standard*. September 2, 2005.

bishops of Kenya collectively met with Wako during a special meeting of the Kenya Episcopal Conference, the KEC decided to adopt a neutral stance on the constitution, urging parishioners to read the document for themselves and vote according to their consciences. This stand, however, did not eliminate differences that existed between the individual Catholic leaders. Of the five national Catholic leaders – the four archbishops and the chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference – Bishop Korir of Eldoret, who served as KEC chairman, practically endorsed the document, as did Archbishop Kirima of Nyeri (which is President Kibaki’s home diocese).<sup>512</sup> Two others, Archbishop Ndingi of Nairobi and Archbishop Lele of Mombasa, remained neutral.<sup>513</sup> Only Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth of Kisumu, a Luo clergyman from Raila’s home province of Nyanza, continued to publicly oppose the Wako draft.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>512</sup> Bishop Korir had initially opposed amending the Bomas Draft, but after reading the final document and being briefed by AG Wako, Korir became a proponent of the Wako Draft, declaring that “by and large it is a big improvement on the Bomas Draft and the current Constitution” and argued that voters should not “throw out the whole document because of a few unclarified issues.” *East African Standard*. August 21 and August 31, 2005; *Daily Nation*. September 4, 2005. Kirima praised the document, while accusing some of the politicians opposing the Draft of purposely misleading Kenyans on its contents. *Daily Nation*. October 3, 2005.

<sup>513</sup> Ndingi declined to take a public stand for or against the document, but he had been an early proponent of holding a referendum on the Wako Draft. *East African Standard*. August 8, 2005. Archbishop Lele, who had only been installed to his position a few months before the referendum, was quiet during the lead-up to the vote.

<sup>514</sup> Even after the bishops had decided that the Church’s stance would be neutral, Okoth continued to oppose the new constitution. He was reported as saying that “Attorney-General Amos Wako short-changed Kenyans by replacing the Bomas Draft with the Kilifi Draft [an alternate name for the Wako Draft, referencing the resort town where this draft was conceived],” and Okoth argued that the Wako Draft “contains some anti-biblical sections, and I must ask Kenyans to vote against it.” *Daily Nation*. September 25, 2005.

The Anglican Church reacted similarly to their Catholic counterparts, adopting a neutral stance after the Attorney General met with the Anglican bishops and addressed their concerns. As with the Catholic Church, however, the Anglican bishops' official stance was followed by dissent. Three Anglican bishops from Nyanza and Western Provinces, where Raila and LDP were popular, called for a postponement of the referendum to work out the contentious issues, deriding the "Kilifi clique" and referring to objectionable elements of the Wako Draft as "poison" that the Kenyan people should not drink.<sup>515</sup> Finally, Mutava Musyimi, who both lead the NCKK and chaired the Ufungamano Initiative, met with Attorney General Wako and quickly adopted a neutral yet seemingly positive stance concerning the Wako Draft, echoing the Catholic statement that the proposed draft was an improvement on both the Bomas Draft and the existing constitution.<sup>516</sup>

The Presbyterian and Africa Inland Churches were among the individual denominations that held out longer in their opposition to the Wako Draft under the Kenya Church banner. The leaders of these denominations, Presbyterian Moderator David Githii and AIC Bishop Silas Yego, had been critical even of the Bomas Draft, specifically on the issue of religious courts. Githii and Yego were among six clerics who filed a lawsuit in 2004 to have the courts declared illegal and thus stricken from the Bomas Draft. The Wako Draft also retained the kadhis' courts provision but, in an attempt to appease the Christian critics of the bill, explicitly allowed for Christian and Hindu courts

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<sup>515</sup> "Bishops Want Contentious Issues Resolved Before the Referendum" *East African Standard*. September 13, 2005.

<sup>516</sup> "Yes Or No? It is Up to You, Kenyans Told" *Daily Nation*. September 2, 2005.

to be formed as well. This new provision did not satisfy the churches, and the Presbyterian Church, AIC and a number of smaller, mostly evangelical and Pentecostal churches, continued their opposition after their Catholic and Anglican counterparts had pulled back. Eventually, however, Kenyan state radio announced that AIC Bishop Yego and the Church's top leadership had decided to let its members read the document for themselves and "vote freely."<sup>517</sup> Presbyterian Moderator had held out in opposing the Wako Draft even after he and other Presbyterian leaders were summoned to State House to meet with President Kibaki.<sup>518</sup> While initially withstanding pressure from the government, Githii relented when faced with his own church members, apparently telling a Presbyterian congregation to "let the people read the document first before deciding which way to vote", a walk-back from the strong "No" stance he had taken in public.<sup>519</sup> Unsurprisingly, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church declined to take a stance for or against the document, although it did call for a postponement of the referendum in order to conduct civic education and work out the contentious issues that had divided the nation.<sup>520</sup>

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<sup>517</sup> KBC Radio. September 7, 2005. This statement seems to be confirmed by a later report in the *Daily Nation* newspaper concerning a group of AIC pastors rejecting the neutral stance "Cracks Emerge in Churches Over Voting" *Daily Nation*. September 25, 2005.

<sup>518</sup> "Bishops Speak Out Against Religious Courts Clause" *Daily Nation*. August 25, 2005.

<sup>519</sup> *Daily Nation*. October 29 2005.

<sup>520</sup> Others calling for the postponement included Those calling for the suspension include the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims, the Central Organisation of Trade Unions (Cotu) and former Cabinet minister Nicholas Biwott. *Daily Nation* September 16, 2005; *Daily Nation* September 19, 2005.

The Kibaki government was able to soften the churches' stance against the Wako document, but these efforts were insufficient to win the referendum. The Orange team won a decisive "No" vote throughout the country, largely due to the ethnic politics at play. The Banana "Yes" side only won in Central Province, which voted overwhelmingly for Kibaki's side.<sup>521</sup> The Orange team won in Kenya's other seven provinces- overwhelmingly in Nyanza (Raila's home), Rift Valley (home of the Kalenjin ethnic group), Western (home of the Luhya), Coast and Northeast Provinces; narrower victories in multi-ethnic Nairobi and in Eastern Province, the latter including the Kamba, Meru and Embu ethnic groups. Table 4.3 details the voting results by province and ethnicity.

#### ***2.4 Government and Church Preferences and Constitutional Reform***

As was the case in the earliest years of the Kibaki presidency, the stances of the churches during the 2004-2005 constitutional review did not firmly fit the centralization argument presented in this dissertation. Churches and government mainly interacted with one another in ways that were dictated by their respective preferences, without church structure playing a decisive role in mediating. While the Kibaki government and the churches maintained their underlying partnerships in development work during this process, the government found itself in need of more active political support for the churches. Specifically, the government needed votes in its favor for the 2005 referendum, and knew that the churches had the potential to mobilize their members either for or against the new draft. The churches were initially inclined to oppose the

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<sup>521</sup> Even Uhuru Kenyatta's home district narrowly sided with Kibaki. Lynch, Gabrielle. "The Fruits of Perception: 'Ethnic Politics' and the Case of Kenya's Constitutional Referendum." *African Studies*, 65, 2, December 2006: 234.

<b>Table 4.3: Kenya 2005 Constitutional Referendum Results by Province and by Ethnic group<sup>1</sup></b>	
Province	Percent Voting "Yes"
Nairobi	43.35%
Coast	20.65%
Northeast	2 5.43%
Eastern	47.33%
Central	93.28%
Rift Valley	22.92%
Western	37.81%
Nyanza	15.04%
Ethnic Group	Percent Voting "Yes"
Kikuyu	93.28%
Embu	83.38%
Meru	90.79%
Luhya	37.81%
Luo	1.43%
Kalenjin	16.13%
Kamba	19.87%
Kisii	42.05%
National	38.0%

<sup>1</sup> Source: Kimenyi, Mwangi S. and Shughart, William F., "The Political Economy of Constitutional Choice: A Study of the 2005 Kenyan Constitutional Referendum" (2008). Economics Working Papers. Paper 200808.

[http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/econ\\_wpapers/200808](http://digitalcommons.uconn.edu/econ_wpapers/200808)

government's draft. Many of the denominations' leaders viewed the continued provisions for Islamic kadhis' courts in the proposed constitution as an affront to their churches and to Christianity. Though government and church preferences were largely decisive in determining the outcome of church-state discussions over the 2005 referendum, the effects of church structure were nonetheless evident in the interactions

between church and government and in the decisions of the church leaders.

Rather than focusing on the centralized churches that could theoretically be coopted or negotiated with more easily, the government targeted the largest denominations, the Catholic and Anglican churches, for special lobbying, as Kibaki needed votes and these churches held sway over large numbers of citizens.<sup>522</sup> The decentralized leadership structure of the Catholic and Anglican Churches, which became more fragmented as each church's bureaucracy expanded, made negotiating with them difficult; by 2005, the Catholic Church had twenty-five bishops leading dioceses throughout the country, including four archbishops, while the Anglican Church had twenty-nine bishops.<sup>523</sup> It was not until each of these denominations brought together all of their respective bishops in special meetings that the government was able to effectively negotiate with the Catholic and Anglican hierarchies, which agreed to end their churches' official opposition. Even then, however, the decentralized nature of power within the Catholic and Anglican hierarchies allowed individual archbishops and bishops to freely defect from the official church stance as their own consciences or the demands of their parishioners dictated.

President Kibaki also attempted to sway the more centralized Presbyterian Church by summoning the Church's Moderator to State House, just as previous presidents had

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<sup>522</sup> The government made a similar effort toward the largest Protestant umbrella group, the NCKK, which indirectly represented the Anglican Church and most of the largest Protestant denominations in Kenya.

<sup>523</sup> "On the Burden of International Debt: A Pastoral Letter of The Catholic Bishops of Kenya" May 17, 2005 ; "Referendum: It is All Up to You, Anglican Bishops Tell Their Flock" *Daily Nation*. September 1, 2005

done when churches were taking stands that the head of state found unacceptable.<sup>524</sup> However, Kibaki lacked the tools of cooptation that had been held by his predecessors, and thus was unable to sway the particularly recalcitrant Presbyterian leader, who found the government's proposed constitution an affront to his personal morality and a threat to his church's long-term interests.<sup>525</sup> The government put less effort into lobbying the leaders of the centralized Africa Inland Church and Seventh Day Adventist Church, which were smaller and mostly drew their members from rather polarized communities.<sup>526</sup> Overall, then, the successful lobbying of the Catholic and Anglican churches ahead of the 2005 poll represented an exceptional instance of government influence on churches during the first portion of President Kibaki's first term in office. In general, the various Christian denominations acted in accordance with the interests of their leaders and members, and the government had few means available to influence the churches' political statements.

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<sup>524</sup> "Bishops Speak Out Against Religious Courts Clause" *Daily Nation*. August 25, 2005.

<sup>525</sup> The Presbyterian Church draws the vast majority of its members from the Kikuyu (or Gikuyu) and related Meru and Embu groups (collectively, GEMA), and these groups were overwhelmingly supportive of Kibaki's proposed constitution, as seen in Table 4.3 above. Despite the popularity of the proposed constitution among these groups, Moderator Githii strongly objected to the inclusion of kadhis' courts in the constitution, consistent with his larger crusade against non-Christian religious influence within government. Githii also expressed strong moral objections to language in the draft that he and other "No" church officials believed opened the door for legalized abortion in the country. "A Clash of Views in the Campaign" *Daily Nation*. August 28, 2005.

<sup>526</sup> The Africa Inland Church draws heavily from the Kalenjin and Kamba ethnic groups, both of who were very strongly opposed to the proposed constitution. Although the Seventh-Day Adventist church draws nearly half of its members from the Kisii ethnic group, who split on the proposed constitution, it draws an equal number of member from the Luo, who were nearly unanimous in following Raila's "No" stance. See Table 4.3 above.



### **3 National Elections and Post-Election Violence, 2005-2008**

#### ***3.1 Negotiation, Cooptation and Appeals to Church Preferences***

President Kibaki responded to the 2005 referendum defeat by sacking his entire cabinet, reconstituting it with Kibaki loyalists, many from the Kikuyu community, to the exclusion of those who had campaigned against the Wako constitution.<sup>527</sup> Most of the major players in the Orange group banded together to form a new opposition party, the Orange Democratic Movement, led by Raila Odinga. Raila, still the undisputed boss of the Luo constituency, was joined by four other leaders of various important ethnic and regional groups to form the ODM “Pentagon.”<sup>528</sup> Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu) and Kalonzo Musyoka (Kamba) initially affiliated themselves with ODM but would break away prior to the 2007 election.<sup>529</sup>

Against this broad national coalition, Kibaki and his supporters remained within the ruling party, renamed NARC-Kenya, which appealed largely to the GEMA communities. Kibaki thus sought additional allies, among them churches.<sup>530</sup> In seeking

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<sup>527</sup> Branch 2011: 260; Hornsby 2013: 711, 742.

<sup>528</sup> The other members of the ODM Pentagon, who represented major ethnic and regional constituencies in Kenya, were: Moses Mudavadi (Luhya), William Ruto (Kalenjin), Najib Balala (a Muslim Arab from the Coast region) and Joseph Nyagah (of the Mbeere people, a smaller ethnic group related to the Embu). Charity Ngilu (a Kamba, like Musyoka) would joined the Pentagon (Hornsby 2013: 749).

<sup>529</sup> Uhuru Kenyatta withdrew KANU from ODM and throwing his support behind Kibaki, and Kalonzo Musyoka branching off to form a small rival ODM branch, ODM-Kenya. Even with these splits, ODM remained a broad-based coalition (Hornsby 2013: 749).

<sup>530</sup> All of the major churches were important political allies; the largest and most widespread denominations, the Catholic and Anglican churches, held sway over the largest number of voters, while the more regionally concentrated churches such as the Presbyterian Church (Central Province), AIC (Rift Valley and Eastern Province) and

the churches' support, President Kibaki was sure to appeal to the church leaders' personal interests – access to resource, prestige, and moral considerations – and to the churches' organizational interests – increasing membership, promoting members' faithful adherence to church doctrines, and church control of resources. The President made a significant effort to employ the tactics of negotiation and cooptation that had benefited previous presidents in their efforts to gain church support. As a first step toward securing the churches' support, Kibaki increased his personal contact and discussions with church leaders. Soon after the referendum defeat, the President held a closed-door meeting at State House with religious leaders including Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi, Presbyterian Moderator Githii and the leadership of the NCCK.<sup>531</sup> Later that week, Catholic Archbishop Ndingi visited State House ahead of a meeting of the Catholic bishop with the President.<sup>532</sup> Around this time, AIC Bishop Silas Yego was publicly associating with Kalonzo Musyoka, as the latter was seeking the Church's support for his upcoming presidential bid.<sup>533</sup> Privately, however, Bishop Yego was also helping to arrange a series of private meetings between Kibaki and former President Moi, who had been on opposite sides of the referendum debate the previous year.<sup>534</sup>

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SDA (Nyanza) could help the president meet the threshold of winning at least 25% of the vote in five of Kenya's eight provinces, as required by the constitution at the time. The Constitution of Kenya. Clause 5(5) e.

<sup>531</sup> *Daily Nation*. December 2, 2005.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>533</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 26, 2006.

<sup>534</sup> *Daily Nation*. February 19, 2006.

While trying to repair relations with the major church leaders, Kibaki also looked to expand his secular political alliances. Facing a serious threat from the ODM challengers, Kibaki put aside whatever reformist agenda remained in order to strengthen his own candidacy and undermine ODM's chances. In February 2006, the *East African Standard* newspaper reported on a secret meeting between Kibaki and Kalonzo Musyoka, who at the time was still affiliated with ODM but would later break away to lead his own faction of the group. Soon after the secret meeting was revealed, security forces launched a massive raid against the newspaper, as well as the KTN television station.<sup>535</sup> The raid and subsequent lack of transparency on the part of the government drew severe condemnation, including rebukes from Catholic KEC Chairman Korir, Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi, and Presbyterian Moderator Githii.<sup>536</sup> This new scandal added to continued calls from the churches for the government to take more steps in dealing with the Anglo Leasing case and other forms of institutionalized corruption. Such calls were made by the leadership of the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and SDA Churches, as well as several parishes of the AIC.<sup>537</sup>

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<sup>535</sup> Ostensibly done in retaliation against the media for reporting on the government's secret political moves, speculation was rife that the raids were actually conducted to destroy evidence possessed by the news outlets that implicated important officials in drug trafficking and other illegal activities. The speculation was only heightened when it was revealed that the operation had been lead by two mysterious Eastern European men with suspected drug ties and connections to the Kibaki family. The two, known in the press as the "Artur brothers," were deported a few months later under a cloud of secrecy. The details of the media raids are described in Branch 2011: 260-263 and Hornsby 2013: 744.

<sup>536</sup> "It Was Cowardly of State, Say Lobby Groups" *East African Standard*. March 3, 2006; "Kibaki Urged to Speak Out On Armenians." *Daily Nation*. June 12, 2006; "Kibaki Under Fire On 'Standard' Raid" *Daily Nation*. March 5, 2006.

<sup>537</sup> "Probe All Players in Anglo Leasing Scam, Says Bishop" *East African Standard*. January 16, 2006; "House May Form Committee to Probe Scandal, Says Ex-Minister"

These condemnations by church leaders over specific government scandals did not prevent Kibaki from continuing his efforts to shore up political support from the major denominations. Kibaki attended a number of church services and religious events for his own Catholic Church as well as other denominations. These appearances help appeal to the churches on religious grounds by presenting the President as a devout Christian, someone who valued the churches and who would continue to implement policies that would respect Christian doctrines.<sup>538</sup> In addition, these events provided opportunities for the President to have friendly contact with church leaders and make public appearances with high-ranking clergy, which mutually benefited the prestige of the President and the clergy involved. After declaring a “National Prayer Day” for April 2006, the President appeared at a large prayer service with various religious leaders, including Presbyterian Moderator Githii, who indicated his support for the government by reading from Romans 13, a scripture often cited as requiring church obedience to secular authorities.<sup>539</sup>

The Kibaki government and the major churches continued to be linked by cooperation in services and development work, such as the Catholic Church coordinating

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*Daily Nation*. January 25, 2006; “Lobby Group: State Plans to Set Up Commission” *East African Standard*. January 31, 2006; “Resignations Are a Political Gimmick, Say Bishops” *East African Standard*. February 15, 2006; “President Told to Act Fast On Reports” *Daily Nation*. February 23, 2006; “US Envoy in New Graft Call” *Daily Nation*. April 23, 2006.

<sup>538</sup> Although many members of Kibaki’s cabinet had been implicated in various scandals, the President himself was able to avoid being directly implicated as having personally profited from these schemes, allowing him to maintain an image as a faithful Catholic.

<sup>539</sup> Gifford 2009b: 224-225.

famine relief efforts with the government.<sup>540</sup> These links gave more opportunities for the President and his officials to receive positive publicity and make joint public appearances with religious leaders. For example, at an AIC church service attended by Kibaki in 2007, Bishop Silas Yego – who served as a useful contact to former President Moi and the Kalenjin community – thanked President Kibaki for the government’s donation of two ambulances to AIC health facilities.<sup>541</sup>

In addition to taking advantage of the ties that existed between church and state in relation to development work and using religious services to facilitate personal contact with church leaders increasing personal contact with church leaders, Kibaki revived the practice sending his closest ministers and political confidants to attend harambees. The 2003 restrictions placed on politicians’ participation in harambees had significantly limited public officials involvement in the fundraisers, but with the election looming, fundraising reemerged in 2006 as a political tool.<sup>542</sup> Sometimes, politicians used surrogates to circumvent the law. First Lady Lucy Kibaki helped raise millions of shillings, appearing at fundraisers for her own Catholic Church, in addition to appearing with Moderator Githii at a Presbyterian harambee and touting her husband’s reelection at

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<sup>540</sup> “Church Struggles to Feed Starving Children and Mothers” *Catholic Information Service For Africa*. January 13, 2006.

<sup>541</sup> “President hails constitutional requirement” August 12, 2007. <http://www.statehousekenya.go.ke/news/august07/2007120801.htm>. Accessed May 22, 2014. Bishop Yego, who remained a close confidant of President Moi, had helped facilitate a series of private meetings between Moi and his successor, as did Catholic Archbishop Ndingi. *Daily Nation*. February 19, 2006, “New Deal in the Making: Between President Kibaki and Former President Moi” *Daily Nation*. September 3, 2006.

<sup>542</sup> “MPs Flout the Law And Preside Over Local Harambees” *Daily Nation*. July 11, 2006.

an Anglican fundraiser.<sup>543</sup> Mary Wambui (the President's unofficial second wife) was also a major force on the harambee circuit, including helping to raise millions of shillings for the Catholic Church.<sup>544</sup> Eventually, top government officials dropped the pretense and openly appeared at harambees. President Kibaki made one harambee appearance before the 2007 election, donating one million shillings to fund Catholic seminaries in Kenya.<sup>545</sup> Vice-President Moody Awori raised 240,000 shillings at an Anglican event and Justice Minister Martha Karua appeared at an AIC fundraiser.<sup>546</sup> The government even connected with the Seventh-Day Adventist Church during this time period, with Vice President Awori attending the Church's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.<sup>547</sup> By using their appearances bringing in significant amounts of cash for these church fundraisers, President Kibaki and his political proxies gave the churches clear financial incentives for supporting the incumbent government, and the churches generally welcomed the influx of attention and resources.

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<sup>543</sup> "Religion; First Lady Urges Church to Expose Leaders Who Tell Lies." *Daily Nation*. April 10 2006; "First Lady calls for concerted efforts to end gender violence." April 9, 2006. <http://www.statehousekenya.go.ke/oafla/news/april06/2006090401.htm> Accessed May 22, 2014; "First Lady Deplores Abundance of Pregnancy Pills." *East African Standard*. November 20, 2006; "First Lady Asks Catholics to Support Women's Empowerment" *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. Aug 7, 2007; "Return Kibaki, First Lady Urges Faithful" *Daily Nation*. October 8, 2007.

<sup>544</sup> Gifford 2009b: 222; "The Wambui Factor" *East African Standard*. June 18, 2006.

<sup>545</sup> "More Millions Still Needed to Rescue Seminaries" *Catholic Information Service For Africa*. May 2, 2006.

<sup>546</sup> "You'll Reap From Tsavo, VP Tells Residents" *Daily Nation*. November 12, 2007; "House to Decide On Poll Zones, Says Karua" *East African Standard*. July 23, 2007.

<sup>547</sup> "SDA Church Marks 100 Years of Growth After Humble Beginning." *Daily Nation*. August 25, 2006.

With the ban on politicized harambee appearances effectively nullified, opposition candidates also used harambees, worship services and other public events to promote themselves to various audiences.<sup>548</sup> Ida Odinga, Raila's wife, helped raise millions of shillings for an Anglican church while promoting her husband's presidential run.<sup>549</sup> Raila himself made appearances at worship services of his denomination, the Anglican Church, and Anglican Bishop Abiero of Maseno South Diocese (located in Nyanza Province) joined leaders of various smaller churches and Muslim clerics in Nyanza in declaring "divine anointing" over Raila's campaign.<sup>550</sup> Raila also made appearances at an SDA church service in Nairobi, as well as a celebration of the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of an AIC church in Kisumu, the major city of Raila's Nyanza Province.<sup>551</sup> AIC Bishop Yego was also at this latter event.<sup>552</sup> Kalonzo Musyoka, running atop the ticket of the small ODM-Kenya splinter party, had been courting the support of Bishop Yego and his Africa Inland Church for several years and continued to attend AIC events during the campaign.<sup>553</sup> KANU leader Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto of ODM

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<sup>548</sup> "Raila: Let Kibaki Meet Orange Team" *East African Standard*. April 24, 2006.

<sup>549</sup> "Raila Bid to Be President is for Real, Says Wife" *Daily Nation*. May 1, 2006.

<sup>550</sup> "Raila: Let Kibaki Meet Orange Team" *East African Standard*. April 24, 2006; "Raila Odinga Begins Bid for Presidency" *East African Standard*. April 30, 2007; "Clerics Anoint Raila for Top Seat" *Daily Nation*. July 29, 2007.

<sup>551</sup> "ODM Delegates Set to Pick Flagbearer" *Daily Nation*. September 1, 2007; "ODM to Agitate for Reforms, Says Raila" *East African Standard*. August 16, 2006.

<sup>552</sup> *Daily Nation*. August 14, 2006.

<sup>553</sup> In 2005, Bishop Yego "laid hands" on Musyoka, a sign of blessing, as the politician was at the time considering running on the LDP presidential ticket. *Daily Nation*. April 11, 2005.

attended separate fundraisers for the Africa Inland Church, as well.<sup>554</sup> Uhuru also donated 120,000 shillings while appearing at the same Catholic fundraiser as President Kibaki, mentioned above. The relative amounts given by Kibaki and Uhuru demonstrated that the President and others who had access to government coffers were at a distinct financial advantage in using fundraisers for political purposes.

### ***3.2 Top Level Church Leaders' Support for Incumbent Government***

While the churches were being heavily courted by the various political parties, the major denominations officially maintained their neutrality. The Secretary-General of the Presbyterian Church, the Reverend Samuel Muriguh, explicitly endorsed President Kibaki for re-election during a church service attended by the President in September 2007, announcing that the church's General Assembly, its highest decision-making body, had decided on this stance.<sup>555</sup> Muriguh's superior, Presbyterian Moderator David Githii, walked this statement back the next day by declaring that the Presbyterian Church would remain neutral in the election, though Githii did acknowledge that supporting Kibaki would be a popular stance given that church members were predominantly from Kibaki's home region of Central Province.<sup>556</sup>

The Catholic Church was generally seen as supporting President Kibaki, a fellow Catholic, during the 2007 campaign, though some divisions emerged. Of the four Catholic archbishops, Nicodemus Kirima of Nyeri did not participate much in the 2007

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<sup>554</sup> "Ex-President Tells Rift Community to Stay in Party" Nation, August 27, 2007. "Ruto Roots for Delegates System" *East African Standard*. March 20, 2007.

<sup>555</sup> *Daily Nation*. September 10, 2007.

<sup>556</sup> *Daily Nation*. September 11 2007.



election process, although he did appear with First Lady Lucy Kibaki at a church service and fundraiser in 2007.<sup>557</sup> Archbishop Lele was also quiet during the campaign. The remaining Archbishops were Kikuyu Cardinal Njue in Nairobi and Luo Archbishop Zacchaeus Okoth of Kisumu.<sup>558</sup> Njue was generally viewed as pro-Kibaki, while Okoth publicly leaned toward Raila. Njue shared religious and ethnic affiliation with President Kibaki, who was a fellow Kikuyu and Catholic. The two also shared some history; during his time as the main opposition leader in 2002, Kibaki had appeared at a fundraiser to help purchase a car for then-Bishop Njue.<sup>559</sup> Just before the 2007 elections, Njue had quickly emerged as the public face of the Kenyan Catholic Church. Not only was he the new Archbishop of Nairobi, the most prominent of the country's four archdioceses, but he had also been elected by the bishops in 2006 to succeed Cornelius Korir as the chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference, his second time holding that position. In addition, in October 2007, it was announced that Njue had been chosen by the Vatican to become Cardinal, only the second Kenyan to receive this honor.<sup>560</sup> By holding these three positions, Cardinal Njue's stature, if not his formal rank within the

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<sup>557</sup> "Religious organizations should spearhead gender equality, says First Lady" August 5, 2007. Having been in poor health for a number of years, Archbishop Kirima succumbed to complications from kidney failure shortly before the election, and his successor would not be named until well after the vote was over.

<sup>558</sup> In 2007, Njue replaced Kibaki's confidant, Raphael Ndingi, as Archbishop of Nairobi when Ndingi stepped down upon reaching the mandatory retirement age for bishops in the Catholic Church.

<sup>559</sup> *East African Standard*. June 24, 2002.

<sup>560</sup> The late Maurice Otunga had previously been appointed a Cardinal within the Catholic Church. As a Cardinal, Njue was placed within the inner circle of leadership within the worldwide Catholic Church and given a vote in choosing the next Pope should the highest position within the Church become vacant.

Catholic hierarchy, was elevated above the other Catholic archbishops and bishops in Kenya. Njue's words were generally viewed as representative of the Catholic Church in Kenya as a whole.

Although the churches did not formally endorse any candidate, they did take stances on relevant issues during the campaign. In general, the top leader of each denomination either favored the President's position on controversial issues or remained neutral. One of the main policy differences that arose between Kibaki and Raila was the concept of majimbo, a devolution of power to regional or local levels.<sup>561</sup> Kibaki and PNU opposed majimbo during the 2007 campaign, while Raila favored the proposed system, as did ODM-K candidate Kalonzo Musyoka.<sup>562</sup> While neither Njue nor the Catholic Church as a body endorsed any candidate directly, the Cardinal condemned majimbo during a press conference held after a meeting of the Catholic bishops in Kenya.<sup>563</sup> The media and political parties took the Cardinal's statement on majimbo as an official Catholic denunciation of one of Raila's main proposals and thus an implicit endorsement of President Kibaki. In the coming days, however, Archbishop Okoth of Kisumu clarified that the majimbo comment was Archbishop Njue's personal view, as the issue had not been discussed by the bishops beforehand.<sup>564</sup> This was a major public rebuke of the

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<sup>561</sup> Majimbo has been a controversial topic in Kenyan politics over the years since independence. Proponents saw it as a way to benefit smaller and less politically connected communities and as a limit on state power. Opponents argued that this policy would lead to divisions and chaos between ethnic groups.

<sup>562</sup> *Daily Nation*. October 27, 2007.

<sup>563</sup> *East African Standard* October 26, 2007; *Daily Nation* October 26, 2007.

<sup>564</sup> *Catholic Information Service for Africa* October 30, 2007; *Daily Nation*. November 2, 2007.

Cardinal by a fellow archbishop. Okoth, a Luo like Raila and presiding over the archdiocese covering Odinga's home area, had previously broken the Catholic Church's neutral stance during the 2005 referendum to side with Raila against the proposed constitution, and the Archbishop again agreed with Raila by endorsing the proposed majimbo system in 2007. Based on the public spat between Cardinal Njue and Archbishop Okoth, many outside observers concluded that the Catholic Church in Kenya have fallen victim to ethnic divisions in its political orientation concerning the election.

Other church leaders displayed partisan leanings as well during the majimbo debate. Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi supported Cardinal Njue's position against majimbo, but Anglican Bishop Abiero, who had previously participated in the anointing service for Raila, objected to Njue's stance.<sup>565</sup> Presbyterian Moderator Githii also backed Catholic Cardinal Njue's stance, condemning majimbo as dangerous.<sup>566</sup> Africa Inland Church Bishop Silas Yego simply urged all sides to cease discussion of the issue until after the election, when it could be addressed through the legislative process.<sup>567</sup> The Seventh-Day Adventist Church, as usual, was quiet during the election.

A second campaign issue arose concerning the Muslim community, and again the top national church leaders sided with Kibaki. After having painted President Kibaki's as a devout Christian and using harambees and development work to materially benefit the churches, the Kibaki campaign also attempted to paint Raila Odinga as pro-Islam (and

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<sup>565</sup> *East African Standard*. October 27, 2007.

<sup>566</sup> The Moderator warned that "majimbo is a monster that the devil would use to cause bloodshed in the nation" by creating ethnic clashes. *Daily Nation*. October 28, 2007.

<sup>567</sup> *East African Standard*. November 5, 2007.

thus anti-Christian). It was revealed in the press that Raila Odinga had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with certain Muslim leaders in the country, granting them certain assurances in exchange for their support. This purported evidence of Raila siding with Muslims in Kenya struck a chord, as there were a few sources of tension between the Muslim and Christian communities in Kenya in recent years, such as the 1998 US embassy bombing by al Qaeda, the US led war on terror following the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks of 2001. These events had heightened the sense of a threat coming from the Kenyan Muslim community and its international connections. Furthermore, Kenyan Muslims presented both an opportunity and a threat to the churches' goal of membership maximization. As the churches had expanded their collective population share since independence, Muslims represented the largest non-Christian groups in Kenya and thus became the targets of church expansion.<sup>568</sup> At the same time, Christian media, domestic and international, presented Muslims in Kenya as expanding through polygamy, high birth rates, and intermarriage, particularly Muslim men marrying Christian women.

Given these perceptions, the idea that a Raila administration would enact pro-Muslim policies represented a heightened threat against the churches and an impediment to their plans to grow by converting Muslims.<sup>569</sup> The MOU between Raila and Muslim

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<sup>568</sup> Gifford 2009b: 168.

<sup>569</sup> Much like the MOU between Raila and Kibaki before the 2002 election, the exact contents of Raila's MOU with Muslim leaders 2007 were not publicly disclosed, leading to wild speculation about what it actually contained. Regardless of its content, the existence of the MOU played into previous notions that Kenya's Muslim community had "settled on Raila as their point man," as Raila had been seen as the main driving force behind the provisions concerning kadhis courts during the 2003-2005 constitutional review process. *East African Standard* April 27, 2003.

leaders drew condemnation from various Christian leaders. The Catholic Church released a letter signed by Cardinal Njue on behalf of the Kenyan Catholic bishops condemning “the granting of special religious favours during campaign time” and denouncing attempts “to turn [Kenya] into a religious state.”<sup>570</sup> Presbyterian Moderator David Githii criticized the agreement, warning that “Christians and Muslims have lived in harmony for a long time, but such pacts could create bad blood between them.”<sup>571</sup> Anglican Archbishop Benjamin Nzimbi called for the contents of the MOU to be disclosed publicly and debated. As before, however, Anglican bishops from Nyanza Province supported their local candidate, Raila, against criticism on this issue.<sup>572</sup> The Africa Inland Church was one of over a dozen denominations signing off on statements by the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK, formerly known as the Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya) concerning the MOU. The EAK challenged Raila to disavow the MOU, rhetorically asking the candidate whether he would uphold the MOU or the Constitution of Kenya if he became president.<sup>573</sup> The EAK remained critical of the MOU throughout the campaign. The SDA maintained its silence, as it does not share other churches’ concerns over the “threat” posed to its members by Islam.<sup>574</sup>

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<sup>570</sup> *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. November 19, 2007.

<sup>571</sup> *East African Standard*. November 30, 2007.

<sup>572</sup> *East African Standard*, November 26, 2007.

<sup>573</sup> *Daily Nation*. November 27, 2007; Gifford 2009b: 61.

<sup>574</sup> Paul Muasya, Executive Director of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church’s East Africa Union (the official name of the Kenyan branch of the SDA) indicated in an interview with the author that the SDA does not view Islam as a threat to its membership. In fact, the Seventh-Day Adventist Church views itself as facing similar conditions as the

The 2007 presidential race was tight, with opinion polls in the months before the election and early ballot counts immediately after the vote suggesting a Raila victory might be likely. When government forces ejected all media from the vote counting proceedings and then suddenly announced Kibaki the winner, the President's hastily arranged swearing-in ceremony was immediately followed by clashes across the country, especially in the ethnically-polarized Rift Valley. Over the next few months, waves of attacks and counter-attacks between ODM and PNU supporters left approximately 1,300 Kenyans killed and hundreds of thousands displaced. One of the worst incidents came in early January where a church was set on fire while perceived PNU supporters huddled for safety inside, burning dozens of individuals alive.

In the wake of the violence, the Kenyan churches generally appealed for peace and reconciliation, though some of the partisan leanings of church leaders persisted. For instance, Catholic Cardinal John Njue stood by his earlier remarks on majimbo,<sup>575</sup> while Archbishop Okoth condemned the government for having stolen the election, and demanded that Kibaki step down and allow a re-vote.<sup>576</sup> Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi offered to mediate between the Government and ODM and took a centrist tone; he supported a recount of the election results, but joined Catholic Cardinal Njue in objecting

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Muslim community in Kenya, as both groups are (in the eyes of the SDA) minority religions that share various moral proscriptions (such as bans on drinking, smoking and consuming pork), and both groups view themselves as competing with the mainline Christian churches for members (July 28, 2010).

<sup>575</sup> *Daily Nation*. January 29, 2008.

<sup>576</sup> *East African Standard*, January 7 and 9, 2008.

to ODM's call for mass action in protest of the results.<sup>577</sup> Njue, Nzimbi and AIC Bishop Yego were among a number of religious leaders who were invited to talks between the government and ODM, while the SDA and Presbyterian denominations were not major players in attempting to resolve the conflict.<sup>578</sup> In the end, the churches' various efforts at mediation were inconsequential for the resolution of the political stalemate. Retired UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan led a "Panel of Eminent African Personalities" who ultimately convinced the two sides to agree to form a Grand Coalition government.<sup>579</sup>

### ***3.3 Top Level Support and Defections: The Role of Church Structure in Influencing Church Political Stands***

By reviving the use of top-level negotiations and cooptation, the government's strategies for winning support ahead of the 2007 presidential election restored the link between church structure and church political orientation. Overall, consistent with the structural view of churches presented in this dissertation, the government was able to successfully win over the top national leader within each denomination (excluding the generally apolitical SDA), but the less centralized churches could not stop defections of prominent leaders within the churches' ranks. The "leader" of the Catholic Church in Kenya, Cardinal Njue, seemed to clearly favor President Kibaki over Raila Odinga, but Archbishop Okoth, technically of equal rank as far as the Kenyan Catholic hierarchy was

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<sup>577</sup> "Kibaki, Raila Spell Out Conditions." *East African Standard*. January 5, 2008. "World Watches Country" *East African Standard*. January 13, 2008

<sup>578</sup> "All Eyes on the Clergy as They Join Talks at State House" *Daily Nation*. January 11, 2007.

<sup>579</sup> Other international actors involved in the intervention included South African Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Ghanaian President John Kufuor.

concerned, displayed positions much more sympathetic to Raila. Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi also sided with President Kibaki on the substantive issues of the campaign, with at least one Anglican bishop from Raila's home region endorsing Odinga instead. The Presbyterian leadership came as close as any of the major churches to giving an official, top-level endorsement to the incumbent President. Bishop Yego of the Africa Inland Church maintained a low profile during the campaign, but his actions ultimately benefited Kibaki by encouraging a split in the opposition vote between the two ODM branches.<sup>580</sup> Furthermore, Bishop Yego's activities as an intermediary between Kibaki and former President Moi paid dividends for the incumbent when Moi declared his support for Kibaki's presidency and later officially endorsed Kibaki for a second term.<sup>581</sup> Only the Seventh-Day Adventist Church remained disengaged from the campaign. This neutrality drew the ire of government minister Simeon Nyachae, himself a member of the SDA, who publicly called on his denomination to publicly declare a stance in the upcoming election.<sup>582</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Yego was seen as close to Kalonzo Musyoka, the presidential candidate running on the ODM-Kenya splinter ticket. While Musyoka was technically an opposition candidate, his candidacy largely had the effect of drawing away votes from Raila and the original ODM, especially among Musyoka's own Kamba ethnic group in Eastern Province, thus helping Kibaki's chances of reelection.

<sup>581</sup> With rising Kalenjin star William Ruto campaigning for the ODM coalition, Moi's endorsement was important to Kibaki in Rift Valley. Yego also accompanied Catholic and Anglican bishops from Rift Valley in a delegation to State House to present their members' grievances to Kibaki, leading to a presidential campaign trip to the province "Moi - I Will Continue Supporting Kibaki" *East African Standard*. March 4, 2007; "Moi Endorses Kibaki for Second Term" *Daily Nation*. August 28, 2007; "President Now Changes His Campaign Style" *Daily Nation*. October 14, 2007.

<sup>582</sup> "SDA Church Told to Declare Stand." *East African Standard*. December 15, 2007.



The shift in strategies by the Kibaki government between 2005 and 2007, which led to differences in the relationship between church structure and church support, reflected the differences in government priorities created by the political circumstances surrounding each vote. Although President Kibaki favored constitutional reform in 2005, his loss in the 2005 referendum did not directly threaten his position as President, and thus Kibaki's lobbying efforts toward the churches remained within the limits of the rules and practices the government had put in place at the beginning of Kibaki's term. In the 2007 vote, by contrast, Kibaki's political survival was on the line, a concern that trumped Kibaki's reform agenda and preferred hands-off leadership style. With the heightened stakes of 2007, the President's desire to secure reelection necessitated securing support from a number of sources, including the major churches. Kibaki was able to appeal to the organizational interests of the churches by painting himself as a devout Christian who valued the churches, implying that the policies of a second-term Kibaki administration would be consistent with the values of the various denominations. He also used Raila's Memorandum of Understanding with Muslim leaders to paint the opposition candidate as a champion of Islam, who would implement policies that favored the growth of Islam over Christianity in the country.

Beyond these appeals to the churches, President Kibaki's need for political support led him to use the tools of negotiation and cooptation to appeal to the organizational interests of the churches and the personal interests of church leaders, even at the cost of undermining Kibaki's own anticorruption agenda. Although Kibaki's governance style was neither as personalistic as Jomo Kenyatta nor as authoritarian as Daniel arap Moi, Kibaki cultivated connections with various individual, top-level leaders

(Ndingi, Njue, Yego) and used financial incentives and personal appearances by himself and his surrogates to maintain support from top clergy such as Moderator Githii. By targeting these top national leaders, Kibaki was able to successfully coopt the official positions of the centralized churches like the AIC and the Presbyterian Church. For the less centralized churches, however, Kibaki's managed to win the support of the most prominent national leader within each denomination – Cardinal Njue of the Catholic Church and Archbishop Nzimbi of the Anglican Church – but neither Njue, Nzimbi nor President Kibaki could prevent other prominent officials within these churches from publicly dissenting. While the incumbent government used its advantages to maintain top-level support, opposition candidates were able to use their local stature and ethnic solidarity to get notable clergy to defect from their denominations' stances. Raila in particular commanded enormous ethno-political clout in Nyanza, and on several issues – constitutional reform, majimbo, even the 2007 election itself – he was able to gain the backing of high-ranking clergy from his home region, even when these clergy had to directly contradict their colleagues or superiors.

### ***3.4 The Limited Role of Ethnicity in Determining Church Political Stands***

Clearly, ethnic affinity played a significant role in church political affiliations. As Moderator Githii made explicit, endorsing Kikuyu President Mwai Kibaki was popular among the GEMA-dominated Presbyterian Church, and Cardinal Njue's apparent support for the President was also generally viewed in ethnic terms. Furthermore, Raila Odinga's ability to win support from certain clergy within the major churches was closely tied to ethnic and regional affinities; the prominent Catholic and Anglican clergy who sided with Raila were fellow Luo from Nyanza Province. The ethnic story, however, does not

negate the role of organizational structure in determining these church positions. With regard to the Catholic Church, the largest church in the country, Kibaki was advantaged by the externally-determined appointments of John Njue within the Catholic hierarchy – KEC chairman, Archbishop of Nairobi and Cardinal within the worldwide Catholic Church – which centralized authority within the Kenyan Catholic Church in the hands of an individual supportive of the President. By having a good relationship with Cardinal Njue, the Catholic Church's top leader and spokesman in Kenya and a fellow Kikuyu, Kibaki gained the perceived backing of the entire Catholic hierarchy.

Similarly, through the support of Anglican Archbishop Nzimbi, who had displayed a favorable disposition toward Kibaki since early in the latter's presidency, Kibaki got backing from the Anglican Church as an organization (which was, incidentally, the denomination of Raila Odinga). Nzimbi's backing was not easily explained by ethnic considerations; as a Kamba, Nzimbi did not have a direct ethnic link to either of the two main candidates, and actually shared ethnic identity with Kalonzo Musyoka, yet he sided against both Musyoka and Raila to support Kibaki's position. Similarly, Bishop Yego of the AIC belonged to the Kalenjin group, which had no presidential candidate in the race and was divided between loyalties to President Moi and ODM member William Ruto. Yego, a longtime friend of Moi, facilitated Moi's support for Kibaki instead of fellow Kalenjin Ruto. Overall, then, ethnic considerations played some role in determining church leaders' political stances but cannot explain church political orientations as well as church structural features and appeals to church preferences on the part of the government.

## 4 Renewed Constitutional Review and 2010 Referendum

### 4.1 Churches' Objections and Campaign Concerning 2010 Constitution Draft

The peace agreement which ended the post-election violence of 2008 created a grand coalition government, with Kibaki remaining as President and Raila took a newly-created position as Prime Minister, creating an ill-defined arrangement of executive power-sharing between the two former rivals. The deal also enlarged the cabinet to accommodate the political allies of the two “Principals,” as Kibaki and Raila were known under the new arrangement. Even though the churches were not instrumental in negotiating the peace settlement between the Kibaki and Raila factions, the resultant coalition government had maintained ties with the major churches. Cardinal Njue lead a delegation of Catholic bishops to separately consult with each Principal shortly after the new arrangement was put into place.<sup>583</sup> Kibaki continued to attend a number of Catholic fundraisers and events with Cardinal Njue, and Raila even appeared at a Catholic bishop installation service over which the Cardinal presided.<sup>584</sup> Cardinal Njue and the other Catholic Archbishops (Okoth, Lele, and the recently installed Peter Kairo of Nyeri) lead a Catholic “courtesy call” to the President in February, 2009, at a time when secular critics and religious leaders were lashing out against the coalition government over its lack of

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<sup>583</sup> “Bishops Dismiss Calls for Elections” *Daily Nation*. April 12, 2008.

<sup>584</sup> “Tight security as Kenyan president tours country's southwest” *BBC Monitoring-Africa*. *East African Standard*. December 15, 2008; “Nation Marks 30 Years of First President's Death” *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. August 22, 2008; “Faiths Join Protests Against Curbs on Media Freedom” *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. December 16, 2008; “Let's Forgive One Another, Says Raila in Visit to Nyeri” *Daily Nation* June 15, 2008.

progress in improving economic and social conditions in Kenya.<sup>585</sup> Kibaki appeared at the installation of new Presbyterian Moderator David Gathanju during April 2009 Presbyterian General Assembly, and the President used this opportunity to defend the coalition government and pledge further cooperation with the Presbyterian Church in the education and health sectors.<sup>586</sup> Three months later, the President and Vice-President Kalonzo Musyoka (who had been appointed to this position by Kibaki during the early days of the post-election violence) were among the government delegates in attendance when Eliud Wabukala was installed as new Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Kenya, with Kibaki delivering remarks at the ceremony.<sup>587</sup> The Africa Inland Church remained mostly withdrawn from politics. The world president of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church visited Kenya and met with President Kibaki in 2008, during which the two leaders spoke of the need for church-state cooperation, but the SDA otherwise distanced itself from public life.<sup>588</sup>

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<sup>585</sup> “Bishops Meet Kibaki After Harsh Censure” *Catholic Information Service For Africa*. February 27, 2009.

<sup>586</sup> Speech by His Excellency Hon. Mwai Kibaki, C.G.H., M.P., President and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Kenya during the P.C.E.A. 19<sup>th</sup> General Assembly, St. Andrews, Nairobi. April 14, 2009. <http://www.statehousekenya.go.ke/speeches/kibaki/april09/2009140401.htm>. Accessed June 7, 2014; “Kenyan president “confident” coalition will hold” *BBC Monitoring Africa-Political*. April 14, 2009.

<sup>587</sup> *Daily Nation*. July 5, 2009.

<sup>588</sup> “Adventist World Leader Challenges Churches On Ethnicity” *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. September 9, 2008. The SDA later made a rare public statement to object to another proposal by a government minister to implement a six-day work week. “Religious Group Criticises 6-Day Working Week” *Daily Nation*. April 5, 2008.

One of the stipulations of the peace deal was the revival of the constitutional review process in order to address deficiencies in the Kenyan political system. Through extended negotiations, the legislature appointed a new twenty-seven member Parliamentary Select Committee (PSC), made up of both Kibaki allies and Raila supporters.<sup>589</sup> The PSC in turn selected a Committee of Experts (CoE), drawn largely from the legal and advocacy communities in Kenya and abroad.<sup>590</sup> The CoE and PSC drew up a new draft that represented a compromise between the different factions in the government and presented a series of changes that would be implemented after the next general elections.<sup>591</sup> The new constitution would eliminate the office of Prime Minister in the next government and maintained a strong President, but also implement new checks and balances on presidential power.<sup>592</sup> The government published the new draft and set August 4 as the date for a nationwide referendum on the proposed document.<sup>593</sup>

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<sup>589</sup> “Kenyan House appoints team to spearhead constitutional reforms” BBC Monitoring Africa – Political. December 17, 2008.

<sup>590</sup> The CoE was made up of six Kenyans, three expatriates who were drawn from a list submitted by the Panel of Eminent African Personalities, and a Director. *Kenya National Assembly Official Report*. February 10, 2009.

<sup>591</sup> The changes proposed by the new constitution would therefore maintain the coalition government, including the office of Prime Minister, until after the next election.

<sup>592</sup> Among other changes, Parliament would be restructured to include a second chamber representative of the various counties (which were essentially the old electoral districts renamed), a simplified version of devolution would be implemented that placed some authority and resources in local hands, and various land reform measures would be put into place.

<sup>593</sup> Hornsby 2013: 777-778.

Unlike the previous effort at constitutional reform, both Kibaki and Raila supported the 2010 draft.<sup>594</sup> Most of the major political figures in the government, representing most of the major ethnic groups and regions of the country, joined the Principals in backing the Yes vote. The main political opposition came from the Rift Valley Province, lead by William Ruto, who was eyeing a 2012 presidential run and had developed an increasingly adversarial relationship with his erstwhile ally Raila after the 2007 election.<sup>595</sup> Ruto managed to lead a group of MPs, mainly from Rift Valley (but with some representation from other regions), to campaign against the 2010 draft. Former President Moi also joined Ruto in opposing the new draft, giving the opposition a largely Kalenjin face. Ruto's group named a number of objections to the new document, including land reform and devolution of some aspects of governing authority. Many in the "Yes" camp accused the "No" leaders of wanting to protect landholdings that they had allegedly acquired under dubious circumstances during President Moi's presidency. The "No" group was assigned the color Red as its symbol, while the "Yes" campaign bore Green, and these colors soon became ubiquitous as the two sides took their campaigns across Kenya.

The other primary source of opposition to the 2010 draft came from the churches. As in 2005, various evangelical and Pentecostal churches objected to the new draft over social issues of centered on abortion and kadhis' courts. Both mainline and evangelical

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<sup>594</sup> The former likely saw passing a new constitution as a way to cement his legacy in positive terms, while Raila would gain a political victory by finally achieving reforms such as devolution and land reform, and these political points were thought to be beneficial for his upcoming presidential campaign. Hornsby 2013: 779.

<sup>595</sup> Raila was the clear favorite to succeed Kibaki as President, and William Ruto sought to supplant the Prime Minister from front-runner status.

churches had since 2009 publicly taken issue with the language surrounding these two issues during the constitutional review process, threatening to oppose the draft if the offending clauses were not altered.<sup>596</sup> The CoE responded to the churches' concerns about abortion by including a "Right to life" clause that, among other things, stated: "Abortion is not permitted unless, in the opinion of a trained health professional, there is need for emergency treatment, or the life or health of the mother is in danger, or if permitted by any other written law."<sup>597</sup> The churches objected to a number of words and phrases in this clause, claiming that the language was purposely tailored to echo western legal principles on abortion and therefore left much leeway to expand abortion rights.

The churches similarly objected to expansion in the jurisdiction of kadhis' courts, as the proposed draft altered language that previously limited kadhis' jurisdiction to the coastal area of Kenya.<sup>598</sup> Beyond this specific objection to the language of the new document, most of the churches objected to retaining any mention of these courts in the new constitution as a violation of the separation of religion and politics and an unfair elevation of one religion at the expense of others.<sup>599</sup> The churches generally favored

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<sup>596</sup> Caren Kiptoo, Program Officer: Peace Building & Conflict Prevention, National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK). Interview with author. November 4, 2009; Rev. Dr. Wellington Mutiso, General Secretary, Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (formerly Evangelical Fellowship of Kenya). Interview with author. November 25, 2009.

<sup>597</sup> *The Proposed Constitution of Kenya*. Clause 26(4). Published May 6, 2010.

<sup>598</sup> Article 66 (4) of the old constitution limited kadhis' courts jurisdiction to "the former Protectorate [of Kenya]," which was a ten-mile wide strip along the coast of what is now Kenya. *The Constitution of Kenya. Revised Edition*. National Council for Law Reporting. 2008. Article 170 of the 2010 proposed draft removed mention of the Protectorate and stated that kadhis' courts shall have jurisdiction "within Kenya."

<sup>599</sup> The 2010 draft did not include provisions for Christian or Hindu courts, as had been included in the 2005 Wako Draft as a means of appeasing these religious groups.



removing the kadhis' court provisions from the constitution entirely, and regulating these Muslim courts through acts of parliament, while various Muslim groups suspected the churches' proposal was setting the stage to restrict or proscribe kadhis' courts in the future.

In addition to the two main issues of kadhis' courts and abortion, various church figures raised a number of secondary objections to the constitution. The Catholic Church claimed that provisions in the constitution concerning family (Article 45) and children (Article 53) could allow for same-sex marriages, encourage priests to marry, and undermine parent-child relationships, while other clauses opened the door for euthanasia and various social vices.<sup>600</sup> Anglican Archbishop Wabukala said that the draft allowed religious-based "limitation of fundamental rights based on religion."<sup>601</sup> The Presbyterian Church believed that the clause banning religious-based discrimination, Article 32(3), would harm church-run institutions, such as schools and hospitals.<sup>602</sup> Negotiations between the government and various churches ended once the government informed the churches that the disputed clauses could not be amended before the referendum.<sup>603</sup> At this point, the major mainline churches, including the Catholic, Anglican, Presbyterian and

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<sup>600</sup> These arguments were presented during 8:30 mass at Holy Family Basilica in Nairobi (and presumably in other Catholic congregations across the country) as part of the Kenyan Catholic Church's "Pro-Life Day", July 18, 2010, which the author attended.

<sup>601</sup> "Anglicans Appeal for Quiet Vote" *Daily Nation*. July 29, 2010. This statement is likely a reference to clause 24(4) of the 2010 constitution, which allowed limitations on personal freedoms in order to allow Islamic law as adjudicated by kadhis' courts.

<sup>602</sup> George Kahuho, Secretary Training and Administration, Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Interview with author. July 20, 2010.

<sup>603</sup> "Churches Gear for No Vote" *Daily Nation*. April 28, 2010.

Africa Inland Church, as well as the NCKK and EAK umbrella organizations, joined their evangelical colleagues in opposing the draft due to these “contentious issues.”

The Christian leaders opposing the 2010 draft presented a more unified and sustained front than they did in 2005. The Catholic Church, for example, launched its “No” campaign in April and sustained it consistently through the August referendum.<sup>604</sup> To the extent that church positions changed over time, they tended to move toward greater opposition for the new constitution, at least as far as the national church leadership was concerned. Eliud Wabukala, the Anglican Archbishop since 2009, initially supported the new draft, but switched to opposing the document once the Anglican House of Bishops met in late April and decided to oppose the draft.<sup>605</sup> The Africa Inland Church worked in collaboration with the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK) umbrella organization to push for a “No” vote.<sup>606</sup> The Presbyterian Church instructed its clergy and local congregations concerning the reasons behind its “No” stance, but was not as publicly vocal as some of the other denominations.<sup>607</sup>

The public face of the churches’ no campaign was largely evangelical. Televangelists such as Bishop Mark Kariuki and Bishop Margaret Wanjiru spoke against

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<sup>604</sup> *Daily Nation* April 18, 2010.

<sup>605</sup> *Daily Nation* April 5, 2010. Archbishop Wabukala sometimes echoed language from 2005 that voters should read the document and vote according to their conscience, but generally stated the Anglican Church’s position as “No” based on the abortion and kadhis’ courts clauses. *Daily Nation* April 29 and May 30, 2010.

<sup>606</sup> David Mulwa, Administrative Secretary, Africa Inland Church. Interview with author. July 7 2010.

<sup>607</sup> George Kahuho, Secretary Training and Administration, Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Interview with author. June 20, 2010.

the 2010 draft during their televised services and at “No” rally appearances alongside Red politicians such as William Ruto. These two pastors had remained in the “No” camp during the 2005 referendum even after the major churches softened their stances, and they revived their objections during the 2010 debate. Although Cardinal Njue and Archbishop Wabukala appeared at some joint press conferences with their evangelical counterparts, the mainstream church mostly stayed away from the public No rallies, distancing the churches’ campaign from the political “No” movement.<sup>608</sup> The major denominations took advantage of their widespread membership and infrastructure to spread their No message through church services, Bible studies, funerals, weddings, and church-run media.<sup>609</sup>

The Seventh-Day Adventist Church was the most prominent denomination that did not join the No camp, as the SDA adopted its usual neutral stance concerning political matters and told its members to vote according to their consciences.<sup>610</sup> When asked about the specific issues raised by the other churches, however, SDA officials noted that their church’s doctrines did not preclude either abortion or the existence of kadhis’ courts

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<sup>608</sup> “Referendum - Church Calls for 'No' Prayers.” *Nation*. July 22, 2010. “Church Rejects Rallies Against Constitution” *Daily Nation*. May 2, 2010.

<sup>609</sup> Jane Marine, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. Interview with author. July 2, 2010; David Mulwa, Administrative Secretary, Africa Inland Church. Interview with author. July 7 2010; 11:30am Church Service, All-Saints Cathedral. July 18, 2010; George Kahuho, Secretary Training and Administration, Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Interview with author. July 20, 2010.

<sup>610</sup> “Adventist Church Remains Neutral On Law.” *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. May 14, 2010.

under the conditions stipulated in the draft constitution.<sup>611</sup> While not an official endorsement, this was a significant defection by a major denomination from the unified stand of the other churches. Within the “No” churches, there were various defections from the national stance. Several bishops in the Anglican Church broke with their Church’s official stance and openly supported the draft.<sup>612</sup> These bishops hailed from the Western and Nyanza Provinces, home to Raila Odinga and the most supportive region for the Prime Minister, suggesting that they were acting based on ethno-regional concerns.<sup>613</sup> In addition to these ethnically based defections, ideologically based differences also arose within the Kenyan Christian community. Former Anglican Archbishop David Gitari, and radical Presbyterian preacher Dr. Timothy Njoya publicly broke with their denominations’ stance to support the new document, possibly at the urging of the government.<sup>614</sup>

#### ***4.2 Explaining Church Opposition to 2010 Constitution Draft: Institutional Constraints and Incompatibilities Church and Government Preferences***

Gitari and Njoya reflected the will of the majority of Kenyans, as the 2010 draft passed overwhelmingly, with nearly 70% of voters casting their ballots for “Yes”. The

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<sup>611</sup> Paul Muasya, Executive Director SDA East Africa Union. Interview with author. July 28, 2010.

<sup>612</sup> “Listen to 'No' Voices, State Told.” *Daily Nation*. May 9, 2010.

<sup>613</sup> The 2010 draft implemented many of the reforms that Raila had previously advocated in the run-up to the 2005 referendum, and with Kibaki retiring after his current term, the passage of the 2010 draft would be a significant political win for Odinga.

<sup>614</sup> “Kibaki wants to counter Church ‘No’” *Indian Ocean Newsletter*. July 10, 2010. Alphonse Shiundu And Andrew Doughman “Njoya Dares Clerics for 'Honest' Debate On New Law” *Daily Nation*. July 25, 2010.

churches suffered a very public defeat, leading observers to question why they had maintained a losing effort even as polling data indicated the document would pass. The churches' 2010 stand became even more puzzling given their actions in 2005, when they eventually relented from their opposition and adopted neutral stances instead. Why did the churches take such a strong stand for an unpopular and losing position in 2010, especially when they were not as adamant in 2005, when a stronger "No" stance would have been more popular? As discussed in Chapter 1, a church's main organizational goals are to increase both the quantity and the quality of their members, as well as increasing the various resources (financial resources, physical assets and human capital) owned or controlled by the church. In addition, church leaders value their own personal resources, public reputation, and internal morality. In the short run, the No stance taken by most of the major churches hurt church leaders' reputations and threatened to decrease membership – a poll conducted just after the referendum showed that only 19% of Kenyans trusted church leaders completely, while 38% of the population did not trust church leaders at all, making them a more distrusted group than politicians.<sup>615</sup> Several church officials acknowledged that the churches' stance might alienate some members, making their stance puzzling to outside observers.

To some extent, church leaders' stances concerning the 2010 constitution likely reflected their own moral beliefs. Catholic doctrine, for instance, categorically prohibits abortion, so any change seen as liberalizing abortion law in Kenya would be opposed by the Catholic Church. The Seventh-Day Adventist Church doctrine, on the other hand, allows for medical exceptions to its general anti-abortion stance, and thus the SDA

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<sup>615</sup> "Churches Dismiss Pollster Over 'Popularity Contest'" *Daily Nation*. August 12, 2010.

leadership had no moral qualms about the proposed abortion clause in 2010. Beyond personal conscience (which is necessarily unobservable), the reputation costs of not taking a stand were higher in 2010 than they were in 2005, for two reasons. First, the evangelical churches that opposed the 2005 draft had grown in size and popularity in the time between the two referenda. By the time of the 2010 referendum, Bishop Mark Kariuki, the head of the Deliverance Church denomination had recently relocated from Nakuru to personally pastor a large congregation in Nairobi.<sup>616</sup> Not only had Margaret Wanjiru's Jesus is Alive Ministries grown, but the Bishop herself had been elected as an MP in 2007 running on the ODM ticket, raising her personal stature. With these evangelists reaching larger audiences with the message that the proposed draft was unchristian, the major denominations risked losing a portion of the most devout Christians among their memberships if these mainstream churches were seen as supporting a morally unacceptable document.

The second reason why the churches believed they could not sit on the fence is because of their partisanship surrounding the 2007 election and their ineffectualness during the post-election violence. Several church leaders expressed the thought that the churches lost credibility and needed to regain it by taking a stand in 2010. Taking an unpopular stand, however, ran the risk of pushing away members who supported the proposed new constitution, but some church officials expressed willingness to shed less devoted and less devout members in order to maintain and energize a core base of

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<sup>616</sup> "Neo-Evangelists Influencing How Kenyans Pray" *Daily Nation*. May 20, 2010.

dedicated members – in essence, to sacrifice quantity for quality, at least in the short run.<sup>617</sup>

Beyond these immediate concerns of morality and prestige, the churches viewed the proposed constitution as presenting two ideological challenges that threatened future church membership and church members' adherence to their denominations' teachings. On the one hand, the churches were reacting to what they perceived to be the growing and evolving presence of Islam in the country. Muslims have been in Kenya for hundreds of years. Trade and migration from the Arabian Peninsula resulted in Muslim ethnic groups along the coast, and the North East Province of Kenya is largely populated by ethnic Somalis who are overwhelmingly Muslim. The kadhis' courts also predate the existence of Kenya as an independent nation, and their inclusion in the constitution at independence was a compromise to keep the coast of Kenya (which had been under the domain of the Sultan of Zanzibar during colonial times) from seceding. Estimates of the Muslim population vary wildly, ranging from less than 10% to 30% or 40% of the country's population<sup>618</sup>. The government's official count is on the low side of this range, approximately 11%. There is a popular perception, however, that the number of Muslims is growing, due to a combination of immigration (mainly from Somalia, including both refugees and illegal immigrants), higher birth rates and conversion. In addition to population share, the economic clout of Muslims is expanding. Sharia-compliant banking has become a presence in the Kenyans economy in the last few years. The first two

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<sup>617</sup> Jane Marine, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. Interview with author. July 2, 2010; Wellington Mutiso, Evangelical Alliance of Kenya. Interview with author. July 13, 2010; Pastor Nelson Makanda, Nairobi Baptist. Interview with author. July 19, 2010.

<sup>618</sup> Muslim leaders tend to cite higher figures; Christian sources give low estimates.

Islamic banks opened in 2008 and within about one year gained a 1% market share in the country, with several conventional banks now offering Islamic options as well.<sup>619</sup> Muslims are increasingly investing in businesses and real estate in Nairobi and elsewhere in the country.

The churches, as well as the government to a large extent, fear that the Muslim population is becoming more aggressive and potentially dangerous. This fear has been fueled by the related problems of international terrorism and spillover from the long-running conflict in neighboring Somalia. The 1998 US embassy bombing, which killed 300 people, still colors the way the government and society view Muslims in the country.<sup>620</sup> With the influx of Somali refugees and illegal immigrants, there were fears that terror and other illicit activities would follow.<sup>621</sup> The 2010 bombing of a World Cup viewing event in neighboring Uganda, for instance, involved several Kenyans, and evidence suggested that Nairobi was an intended target as well.<sup>622</sup> The real estate boom in the predominantly-Somali Eastleigh neighborhood in Nairobi was suspected to operate as

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<sup>619</sup> “Islamic Banks ‘Doing Well.’” *Daily Nation*. April 29, 2009.

<sup>620</sup> Gifford 2009b: 167.

<sup>621</sup> These fears have unfortunately been validated in recent years. In late 2011, Kenya responded to the spillover of violence across its border by sending troops into neighboring Somalia to battle the militant Islamic group Al-Shabab. Since then, there have been a number of retaliatory terror attacks within Kenya, most notably the September 2013 attack on Westgate Mall in Nairobi, which left at least 67 people dead. Tom Odula. “Somali militants moving into Kenya, official says” *Associated Press*. January 14, 2014; Tom Odula. “Kenya police: Car bombers linked to mall plotters” *Associated Press*. March 31, 2014.

<sup>622</sup> “Kampala Bombers ‘Plotted to Hit Nairobi’” *Daily Nation*. Sept 19, 2010.



a way to launder money coming from Somali piracy, and the government had initiated crackdowns against these presumed illicit funds.<sup>623</sup>

Because of these concerns, the church saw the constitutional referendum as a way of pushing back against the growth of Islam in the country. In addition to the kadhis' courts, some churches also objected to a new provision that conferred citizenship to young abandoned minors whose nationality could not be determined, arguing that this would benefit illegal Somali immigrants.<sup>624</sup> Some church officials also expressed concern that anti-discrimination laws would largely be used to allow non-Christians, specifically Muslims, to infiltrate and take over church-run institutions such as schools and universities.<sup>625</sup> Eliminating the kadhis' courts would have limited impact on the growth of Islam in Kenya, as the courts do not propagate the faith, but as the courts potentially make it easier for Muslims to practice their faith in Kenya, eliminating or limiting them

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<sup>623</sup> "Pirate Booty Causes Kenya Property Prices to Skyrocket" *Voice of America English Service*. March 18, 2009.

<sup>624</sup> Ken Kimiywe, Senior Pastor, Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Valley Road. Interview with author. July 7, 2010; Peter Nuthu, Executive Treasure, Kenya Assemblies of God. Interview with author. July 12, 2010. Article 14(4) of the 2010 Draft read: "A child found in Kenya who is, or appears to be, less than eight years of age, and whose nationality and parents are not known, is presumed to be a citizen by birth."

<sup>625</sup> Ken Kimiywe, Senior Pastor, Nairobi Pentecostal Church, Valley Road. Interview with author. July 7, 2010; Peter Nuthu, Executive Treasure, Kenya Assemblies of God. Interview with author. July 12, 2010; Joy Mdivo, House of Bread, Deliverance Church. Interview with author. July 12, 2010; George Kahuho, Secretary Training and Administration, Presbyterian Church of East Africa. Interview with author. July 20, 2010. Article 27(4) of the draft stated that "The State shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against any person on any ground, including race, sex, pregnancy, marital status, health status, ethnic or social origin, colour, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, dress, language or birth." Article 27(5) extended these protections to include actions by private citizens: "A person shall not discriminate directly or indirectly against another person on any of the grounds specified or contemplated in clause (4)."

may have had some effect. Largely, however, the issue seemed symbolic, intended to send a message against the ascendancy of Islam in the country.

The second major force that the church was pushing back against was a perceived encroachment of liberal, progressive and anti-Christian ideas into Kenyan law and society. Abortion rights constitute the main issue in this fight. The churches in their campaign often offered very detailed analysis of the language used in the “abortion clause” of the draft, pointing out how they believed it was shaped by western ideology. To give one example, the clause allows abortion if the “life or health” of the pregnant woman is in danger. The churches see the inclusion of “health” as a reference to the World Health Organization definition of “health”, which defines the concept as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”<sup>626</sup> This definition, they argue, is overly broad to the point of allowing abortion for almost any circumstance.<sup>627</sup>

Though less adamant than they were about abortion rights, the churches saw other affronts to their conception of the family, including loopholes that might allow same-sex marriage or lead to restrictions on the rights of parents over their children.<sup>628</sup>

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<sup>626</sup> Preamble to the Constitution of the World Health Organization as adopted by the International Health Conference, New York, 19-22 June, 1946; signed on 22 July 1946 by the representatives of 61 States (Official Records of the World Health Organization, no. 2, p. 100) and entered into force on 7 April 1948. In my interview with CoE member Bobby Mkangi, he denied that the inclusion of “health” was a reference to this document, and argued that the government of Kenya was free to define the term in officials and the citizenry saw fit (August 10, 2010).

<sup>627</sup> Interviews with author: Caren Kiptoo, NCKK. June 30, 2010; Wellington Mutiso, EAK. July 13, 2010; George Kahuho, Presbyterian Church. July 20, 2010.

<sup>628</sup> These objections were raised, for example, during the 8:30am Catholic Mass at Holy Family Basilica in Nairobi as part of the Kenyan Catholic Church’s National Pro-life Day

Furthermore, the churches perceived an open-ended liberal bias written into the constitution through clauses that incorporated international law into the national law of Kenya and guided judges to interpret laws in ways that err on the side of extending rights.<sup>629</sup> These provisions, the churches argued, were ways to introduce liberal ideals into Kenyan law without having the people or their elected representatives vote on them. Much of this concern for western liberal influence was heightened, if not created, by the 2008 election of Barack Obama. President Obama's administration was perceived among some church leaders as actively pushing a liberal agenda on other countries. One evangelical leader commented to me that George Bush sent Africa money to fight AIDS while Barack Obama sent money to provide abortions, and some church leaders stated matter-of-factly that the Yes campaign was receiving US funding or encouragement.<sup>630</sup> So even though the abortion legislation was similar to that in the 2005 draft, there was more concern that additional force would be placed behind the new law pushing the country in a liberal direction.

The mainline churches thus found themselves facing competition on three sides – from upstart evangelical denominations that threatened to draw away the most fervent Christians; from increasingly aggressive, proselytizing and transnational forms of Islam

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of Prayer, which the author attended. A lengthy discussion focused on Articles 45 and 53 of the proposed draft, which covered "Family" and "Children," respectively.

<sup>629</sup> Article 2(5) of the proposed draft stated that "the general rules of international law shall form part of the law of Kenya." Article 20(3) read: "In applying a provision of the Bill of Rights, a court shall (a) develop the law to the extent that it does not give effect to a right or fundamental freedom; and (b) adopt the interpretation that most favours the enforcement of a right or fundamental freedom."

<sup>630</sup> Interviews with author: Wellington Mutiso, EAK. November 25, 2009 and July 13, 2010; George Shiramba, Senior Pastor Nairobi Baptist Church. July 6, 2010.

that threatened to draw away marginal church members; and from western, liberal values and worldviews that could potentially erode the doctrines and moral principles upon which the churches based their existence and moral authority.

As had been the case during the early years of the Kibaki presidency, internal church structure did not have a noticeable influence on the churches' political stances. As in the initial period of the Kibaki presidency, the relationship between church structure and church support broke down due to the government refraining from using the tactics of negotiation or cooptation to win the backing of church leaders. Given the strength with which the churches opposed the 2010 constitution, why did the government not anticipate the churches' objections and either amend the document or gain the churches' compliance through incentives and negotiation? As in the initial years of the Kibaki presidency, this neglect of the churches on the part of the government arose from a combination of institutional constraints and lack of motivation on the part of the government. The nature of the 2009-2010 constitutional review process curtailed the ability of government the ability to bargain with the churches. The factions that made up the coalition government, along with the Kofi Annan-led Panel of Eminent African Personalities, purposely designed the Committee of Experts to be removed from politics. The members of the CoE were technocrats, mainly drawn from the legal and human rights communities.<sup>631</sup> Three of the nine members of the committee were expatriates, recommended by the Panel of Eminent African Personalities. The CoE sought to promote individual and group rights while balancing the demands of a number of

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<sup>631</sup> The only non-lawyer on the committee was an academic and historian. "Kenya: Constitutional review team sworn in" *BBC Monitoring Africa-Political*. March 2, 2009.

communities and interest groups, and viewed the churches as one type of interest group among many. As one of the committee members recounted shortly after the referendum, no one received everything they wanted from the new set of laws.<sup>632</sup> In the case of abortion, for example, the relevant clause was only added after churches requested that the constitution address the issue, and the wording was meant to outlaw abortion as a general principle while making allowances that satisfied other civil society actors and the medical community.<sup>633</sup> The kadhis' courts clauses were included due to historical precedent and for the purpose of providing continued protect to Muslims as a minority population within the predominantly Christian Kenya.

After the Committee of Experts handed of the draft to the Parliamentary Select Committee, the PSC managed to produce a document that included acceptable compromises on the major issues that the Kibaki and Raila factions found most important, including retaining a strong executive President and limiting devolution to two levels.<sup>634</sup> When brought before the full Parliament, various MPs proposed 150 amendments to the draft, but lingering divisions between the various political factions prevented any of these amendments, including those supported by Christian churches, from obtaining the supermajority required for altering the draft.<sup>635</sup> These procedural

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<sup>632</sup> Bobby Mkangi, Member of Committee of Experts. Interview with author. August 10, 2010.

<sup>633</sup> Ibid.

<sup>634</sup> *Daily Nation*. April 22, 2010.

<sup>635</sup> "Draft - Cotu Wants Locals Given Free Reign." *Daily Nation*. April 8, 2010. Constitutional amendments required approval of at least 145 of the 222 MPs who comprised Parliament. "Leaders in Secret Waki List Face Jail As Tribunal Planned" *Daily Nation*. October 17, 2008.

constraints distanced the Kibaki government from the constitution-making process, limiting the ability of the government to bargain with the churches. Once the draft was finalized and a referendum date set for August 2010, the government attempted to bring the churches on board, employing the usual tactic of high-level negotiations with church leaders. The government targeted both the leaders of the largest churches, such as Catholic Cardinal Njue and Anglican Archbishop Wabukala, as well as prominent evangelicals such as Bishops Mark Kariuki and Margaret Wanjiru.<sup>636</sup> By this point, however, the government was constrained in its ability to make any changes to the document prior to the referendum, and its promises to amend the draft after the vote were deemed insufficient by church leaders.

Once the draft was finalized and the referendum date set, the government also had only limited incentive to placate church leaders. As established in Chapter 1, governments can seek church support to help mobilize citizens around elections or other important events or policies. The government did not need the church's support to pass the 2010 draft. With Kibaki, Raila and their main allies supporting the document, the major political blocs and ethnic groups were united around the 2010 draft, with the exception of William Ruto and the Kalenjin ethnic group in Rift Valley. Furthermore, both the politicians and the population were eager to enact reforms as a way to prevent the next general elections from turning into a repeat of the bloodshed that had followed the 2007 vote. Having taken five years to create a new draft and organize a new constitutional referendum after the 2005 vote, Kenyan citizens and political leaders were

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<sup>636</sup> Isaac Ongiri. "Kibaki, Raila Plot to Get 'No' Bosses to Defect" *Nairobi Star*. July 21, 2010.

operating under a sense of urgency to pass a new constitution ahead of the general elections expected in 2012.<sup>637</sup> A series of opinion polls conducted in the country in June and July showed the percentage of intended voters who intended to vote “Yes” between 57-66%, a number that trended upward over time.<sup>638</sup> These numbers included majorities of both Catholic and Protestant Christians surveyed.<sup>639</sup> Most of these polls even showed slim majorities for the “Yes” vote in Rift Valley, the heart of the political opposition to the draft. Kibaki and Raila thus had reason to be confident that the draft would pass comfortably even without the support of either William Ruto and his allies or the churches. Even though the government preferred to have the backing of the churches, it did not need the churches’ support in this instance.

One of the church officials I interviewed in 2010 made a point of stating that his denomination’s opposition to the draft constitution should not be seen as a vote of no confidence in the government, which the church still recognized as legitimate.<sup>640</sup> This statement can be generalized to reflect church-state relations in Kenya; despite the

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<sup>637</sup> A January 2012 ruling by the Kenya High Court delayed the general elections from August, as dictated by the constitution, until March 2013. “Kenya high court delays elections to March 2013”. *Reuters*. January 13, 2012.

<sup>638</sup> “Referendum Baseline Public Opinion Poll.” Synovate Ltd. June 4, 2010; “Opinion Poll on Referendum.” Strategic Research. July 2010; “An Infotrak Harris Poll On Kenyans’ Voting Intentions for the August 4th Referendum on the Proposed New Constitution” Infotrak Research & Consulting. July, 2010; “Opinion Poll on Referendum.” Strategic Research. July 2010.

<sup>639</sup> “An Infotrak Harris Poll On Kenyans’ Voting Intentions for the August 4th Referendum on the Proposed New Constitution” Infotrak Research & Consulting. July, 2010; “Opinion Poll on Referendum.” Strategic Research. July 2010.

<sup>640</sup> George Kahuho, Secretary Training and Administration, PCEA. Interview with author. July 20, 2010.

disagreement between the churches and the government over the 2010 constitution, the various denominations still shared interests with the government that facilitated cooperation after August 4, 2010. The Catholic and Anglican churches brought in international relief aid to deal with a famine in marginal regions of Kenya in 2011.<sup>641</sup> The Catholic Church also worked on a major clean water project in Eastern Province, bringing in both local and international funds.<sup>642</sup> Prime Minister Raila Odinga and Uhuru Kenyatta, Deputy Prime Minister in the coalition government, spoke at a groundbreaking ceremony for a new Anglican University in Kenya.<sup>643</sup> The Presbyterian Church and its international partners built “the largest suspension bridge in Africa” in Malindi, an area along the Kenyan coast.<sup>644</sup> Uhuru Kenyatta appeared on behalf of Kibaki at the opening of an expansion wing of the AIC Kijabe Mission Hospital.<sup>645</sup> Kibaki attended an SDA harambee in Kisii, located in Raila’s Nyanza Province.<sup>646</sup> The President reappointed Archbishop Wabukala as chairman of the National Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering

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<sup>641</sup> *Catholic Information Service for Africa*. June 17, 2011; Alphonse Gari “4,000 Families Get Sh100 Million Church Aid” *Nairobi Star*. September 9, 2011

<sup>642</sup> “Igembe 40-Acre Dam to Cost the Catholic Church Sh10 Billion” *Nairobi Star*. January 17, 2012.

<sup>643</sup> “Shun Tribalism, Raila and Uhuru Tell Leaders” *Daily Nation*. June 21, 2011.

<sup>644</sup> “New Bridge Saves Villagers from the Jaws of Crocodiles” *Daily Nation*. March 23, 2010.

<sup>645</sup> Njenga, Stanley. “Kibaki Asks for Help in Health Sector.” *Nairobi Star*. November 16, 2012.

<sup>646</sup> “Kibaki And Raila Set for Kisii Visit” *Nairobi Star*. June 23, 2011.



Committee.<sup>647</sup> As demonstrated by these continued collaborations between church and government, Kibaki had rightly believed that he could pass the 2010 constitution over the churches' objections without permanently severing useful church-state links.

## 5 Conclusion

After the highly polarized nature of church-state relations that characterized the Moi presidency, the interactions between the major Christian denominations and the Kibaki government were initially friendly. Kibaki entered office enjoying the goodwill of the majority of citizens and the major churches in Kenya, but the new President was not immune to church criticism. Although Kibaki initially received some leeway from the churches, including the denominations that had been most critical of President Moi, issues of systematic corruption harmed the government's image and drew criticisms from the churches. The government was constrained in its ability to obtain agreement or compliance from the churches. Kibaki initially won office by repudiating the authoritarian practices of the Moi government, meaning that the new President could not use the strong-arm tactics of his predecessor. Furthermore, to the extent that the government did attempt to tackle corruption, such as placing significant restrictions on the ability of government officials to participate in harambees, these measures constrained the ability of Kibaki and his allies to provide financial incentives to the churches or their leaders. The government and the churches still found avenues for

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<sup>647</sup> Francis Mureithi "Kibaki Re-Appoints Wabukala for Anti-Graft Committee" *Nairobi Star*. August 20, 2011.

mutually beneficial relations in terms of service provision, relief aid and development work, even if the churches were critical of government dealings in other areas.

Nevertheless, when the government most needed the support of the major churches, Kibaki fell back to the tactic of financial incentives and high-level relations with top church leaders. The Kibaki government was characterized by three major political events: the 2005 constitutional referendum, the 2007 general elections (and their violent aftermath), and the 2010 constitutional referendum. In 2005, the President faced heavy opposition in his efforts to pass a new constitution, including pushback from the churches. The government responded by engaging the various archbishops and bishops in direct, high-level negotiations, culminating in Attorney General Wako's whirlwind three-day engagement with the major church leaders over the legislation that bear his name. Ultimately, the government received the backing of the most significant national-level church leaders. When Kibaki again needed votes for a close presidential race in 2007, he again sought the support of the churches and specifically of their top leaders. The President was able to obtain implicit backing from most of the national church leaders, though neither the government nor the churches could prevent defections within the church ranks, which was facilitated by decentralized structures within the Catholic and Anglican denominations in particular. After the 2007 elections, post-election violence and subsequent peace deals, the resulting coalition government and the churches found themselves on opposite sides of a 2010 constitutional referendum, due to conflicting preferences and political processes that made negotiations difficult. The major churches, faced with threats from evangelical churches, Islam and western-style liberalism, saw the 2010 document as detrimental to their long-term goals of expanding

membership and maintaining members' faithfulness to church doctrines. The government had only limited incentives to gain church support by negotiating with the churches on these issues, as political alliances and popular will within Kenya and abroad assured the Kibaki government that the new draft would pass even without church support.

In many ways, the Kibaki era represents a hard case for testing the influence of church structure on church political activity. Political reforms implemented during this period limited the tools available to the government for influencing churches, while the structures of the Catholic and Anglican churches in particular were not generally conducive to centralized negotiations between these churches and the state. Nevertheless, even in these circumstances, the Kibaki government maintained ties with the top national leadership of the major churches, and the government used the tools it possessed to influence church support in the instances when the government most needed the churches to influence popular opinion.

## Chapter 5 Conclusion

### 1 Introduction

This dissertation is an examination of the ways in which civil society organizations behave as political actors, using several of the largest Christian churches in Kenya over time as case studies. Within the field of political science, religious organizations have been significantly understudied as political actors.<sup>648</sup> Even the upsurge of interest in political Islam following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks has largely produce political science research that “does not tie inquiries to broad questions that engage the discipline.”<sup>649</sup> Some scholars have recognized the usefulness of examining religious organizations as rational actors, but political science has yet to catch up with other disciplines such as sociology when it comes to taking religion seriously. Furthermore, much of the political science work that has been done on religion looks at the effects of religious beliefs, practices, and affiliations on individual members’ political capabilities and activities<sup>650</sup>. Understanding the impact of religion on individuals is useful, but examining the behavior of religious organizations is also an important but relatively neglected topic, even among social scientific works on religion.

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<sup>648</sup> As Wald and Wilcox (2006) note in their review of the paucity of research on religion in the pages of the *American Political Science Review*, “apart from economics and geography, it is hard to find a social science that has given less attention to religion than political science.” Wald, Kenneth D., and Clyde Wilcox. "Getting Religion: Has Political Science Rediscovered the Faith Factor?." *American Political Science Review* 100.04 (2006): 523-529.

<sup>649</sup> Ibid: 528.

<sup>650</sup> See, as examples: Verba, Sidney, Kay Lehman Schlozman, and Henry E. Brady. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics. Vol. 4*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1995; Djupe, Paul A, and Christopher P. Gilbert. *The Political Influence of Churches*. Cambridge University Press. 2008.

The size, resources, influence and organization of Christian denominations, in particular, make them formidable political actors. The Catholic Church, to look at the most prominent example, is “probably the wealthiest institution in the entire world,” and its national branches are generally impressive in terms of both size and resources when compared to other private organizations.<sup>651</sup> Churches also often have the size and organization to carry out mass mobilization, and their role as producers and disseminators of moral prescriptions give them significant influence in determining how their members vote and otherwise engage in political and civil life. Ignoring the roles of religious groups as political actors is therefore unwise given their potential and actual political clout. Overlooking religious actors in developing contexts such as Africa is especially problematic, as the historical dearth and underdevelopment of secular civil society has often left churches as among the few groups with the organization, resources and freedom to challenge the state.

Despite the focus on Christian churches, the importance of the insights derived in this study is not limited to scholars of Christianity or even religion, nor is the usefulness of these analyses limited to Kenya specialists or Africanists more generally. Understanding how organizations channel preference into political actions and how governments engage with organizations in terms of negotiation or cooptation is important

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<sup>651</sup> The American Catholic Church, for example, has an annual operating budget that surpasses the yearly revenue of companies such as General Motors or Apple. Matthew Yglesias. “How Rich is the Catholic Church?” *Slate*. March 14, 2013. [http://www.slate.com/articles/business/moneybox/2013/03/catholic\\_church\\_and\\_pope\\_francis\\_religious\\_institutions\\_are\\_exempted\\_from.html](http://www.slate.com/articles/business/moneybox/2013/03/catholic_church_and_pope_francis_religious_institutions_are_exempted_from.html). Accessed July 23, 2014; “The Catholic Church In America: The Working.” *The Economist Newsblog*. August 16, 2012. <http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2012/08/catholic-church-america>. Accessed October 6 2014.

for examining political parties, advocacy organizations, trade unions and various other forms of political or politicized social organizations. Examining churches has been useful in approximating conditions of exogenous organizational structuring and restructuring in order to more clearly examine how organizational factors influence political orientation. With internal structures that developed in circumstances long removed from contemporary national politics, Kenyan churches presented pre-established organizational models to the Kenyan government.

This concluding chapter reviews and summarizes the arguments and evidence presented in this dissertation, presents additional evidence that expands the arguments beyond Kenya by examining church political orientation in Africa more generally, and highlights the importance of the arguments presented in the dissertation. In Section 2, I review the main arguments of the dissertation and the evidence marshaled from the church case studies in Kenya across the country's first three presidents. Section 3 presents evidence to test the external validity of these arguments, especially the primary argument of the importance of church structure on influencing church support, by using statistical analyses of church political stances across independent Africa. Section 4 expands upon the quantitative analysis with a qualitative discussion of selected cases from the data. Section 5 concludes by discussing the significance of the results and analyses of this dissertation for scholars and political actors alike.

## **2 Church Political Orientation in Kenya: Structure and Preferences**

### ***2.1 Church Structure and Church-State Relations: Negotiation and Cooptation***

I have focused my analysis on the ways in which the churches under study differ in their internal leadership and decision-making structures and explored how these differences influence the ways in which the churches have interacted with various governments over time and ultimately why the churches have taken different stands toward these governments. Past analyses of church political and economic activity, which collectively form a body of literature known as the political economy of religion, have explained church activities either by focusing solely on the preferences of churches or by looking at the interaction between churches and other actors, such as rival denominations or the state, based on the assumed preferences of these actors. I add to the existing analyses by arguing that these interactions, particularly the interactions churches have with governments and states, are influenced and mediated by structures internal to the churches, most importantly leadership (de)centralization, leadership accountability and internal democracy or autocracy in decision-making procedures. These structural characteristics of churches influence how preferences within a church are aggregated into organizational goals, how churches' organizational goals are presented to external actors such as governments, and how churches interact with governments.

On the one hand, leadership centralization gives centralized churches negotiation advantages over decentralized churches. A single leader can more coherently and more credibly present his church's interests to the government. Furthermore, such a leader can make credible commitments during negotiations with the government, particularly when this leader has authority within his church to make policy commitments without fear of

veto or sanction.<sup>652</sup> Additionally, the existence of a single leader increases the role that personal relationships, such as those that a church leader may have with a country's president or other important political leaders, can play in facilitating church-state negotiations to the mutual benefit of both actors. On the other hand, a church leader who possesses sole and ultimate decision-making authority has leeway to make commitments on behalf of the church that benefit the leader individually, regardless of whether they benefit the church as an organization. Therefore, the leaders of centralized and authoritarian churches may not represent the interests of their organizations, as distinct from the interests of the church leaders as individuals, to the government. In both scenarios, negotiation and cooptation, centralized churches are more likely to come to an agreement with governments, and since governments seek political support from churches, centralization makes church support for government more likely and church opposition less likely.

These two mechanisms, negotiation and cooptation, have both been evident throughout the history of church-state relations in Kenya. During the era of President Jomo Kenyatta, the hierarchies of the major churches in Kenya were relatively small, with few high-ranking officials (such as bishops), and each denomination generally had a single individual sitting atop its national leadership structure. Given the small size of the church elite, President Kenyatta was able to maintain personal relationships with several church leaders, such as Catholic Archbishop J.J. McCarthy and Presbyterian Moderator

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<sup>652</sup> Kalyvas (2000) cites the internal structure of religious institutions as being decisive in the ability of religions to make credible public commitments of political moderation in the context of democratic transitions. Kalyvas, Stathis N. "Commitment Problems in Emerging Democracies: The Case of Religious Parties." *Comparative Politics* (2000): 379-398.



Charles Kareri. Even when personal relationships did not exist between the President and national church leaders, the hierarchical and centralized church structure still facilitated negotiations by clearly delineating the lines of authority within the churches and allowing church leaders to appoint effective delegates to engage with government officials.<sup>653</sup>

Even when compared to the heavy-handed rule of President Kenyatta, the authoritarian rule of his successor, Daniel arap Moi left little room for negotiation. President Moi instead used inducements, threats and manipulation to coopt and control church leaders.<sup>654</sup> Moi received strong support from his own denomination, the Africa Inland Church, and specifically from this church's leaders. In turn, the son of the AIC's top leader became a Member of Parliament under the ruling party, and was promoted to a cabinet position within the government. Through his Anglican Attorney General, Charles Njonjo, President Moi manipulated the election of a new Anglican Archbishop, but this move to control the Anglican Church backfired once Njonjo fell out of the president's good graces and thus eliminated Moi's connection to the Church. The President provided prestige and publicity to the head of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Kenya, and maintained friendly relations with the international hierarchy of the SDA as well.

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<sup>653</sup> For example, Anglican Archbishop Obadiah Kariuki was Kenyatta's brother-in-law and thus a favored confidant of the President, but he was also of lower rank than Anglican Archbishop Leonard Beecher, meaning the Archbishop could employ Kariuki's relationship with Kenyatta to present church concerns to the President. When the government's tacit endorsement of forced Kikuyu oaths threatened the Church, Archbishop Beecher was able to compel Bishop Kariuki to both take a public stand against the practice and privately discuss the issue with Kenyatta.

<sup>654</sup> Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi also took advantage of personal relationships with church leaders. This was especially true when Moi's longtime associate, Ezekiel Birech, served as head of Moi's own Africa Inland Church.

President Moi made a habit of being a presence, in person or through a high-ranking government representative, at the triennial Presbyterian General Assemblies, during which the Presbyterian Moderators were elected to lead the denomination. When a sole Presbyterian minister became too much of a critic of the government, Moi summoned the sitting Moderator and other Presbyterian officials to his office, after which the Presbyterian leadership took measures to discipline the outspoken clergyman.

Despite Moi's use of material benefits and strong-arm tactics, the President eventually faced strong church opposition, particularly from the Anglican and later the Catholic churches. The fallout between the Anglican Archbishop and the government over the dismissal of Charles Njonjo was exacerbated by the outspokenness of individual bishops within the Anglican hierarchy. As the federal-style hierarchy of the Anglican Church grew in size, individual bishops from various parts of the country rose within the ranks of the church, promoted by local Anglicans within their particular dioceses and representing the local grievances of these Anglican populations. Thus, bishops like David Gitari, Henry Okullu and Alexander Muge increasingly drove church-state relations with their sustained criticisms of the Moi government. The most notable and sudden structural change, however, occurred within the Catholic Church when the Vatican decentralized the national church hierarchy by creating three new archdioceses within Kenya in 1990. This change elevated several bishops, representing various parts of the country, to national leadership and corresponded with a drastic change in the Catholic Church's political involvement – the relatively apolitical denomination quickly became critical of the political and economic failures of President Moi and the KANU ruling party. The Catholic Church emerged as the strongest and most consistent source of church criticism

of the Moi government from 1990. As these structural changes made it more difficult for the President to control the voices of the largest denominations like the Catholic and Anglican churches, he instead increasingly associated himself with more centralized churches like the AIC and SDA that he could more easily coopt.

Once Mwai Kibaki ended KANU's rule within Kenya and ushered in a new era of democracy, the new President's hands-off style, a reflection of both Kibaki's own temperament and poor health, resulted in less of the personalized church-state relations that characterized the Kenyatta and even the Moi governments. Furthermore, political reforms decentralized government funding for local development, curtailed politicization of harambees (fundraisers), and largely did away with authoritarian practices such as partisan use of police violence and political detentions. Such reforms initially gained Kibaki popular support in Kenya and international support as well, but they also meant that the government had given up many of the tools it had previously used to coopt civil society actors and threaten or punish government critics. Consequently, church structure had less of an impact on church political activities during this period, as the mechanisms through which structure influence church-state relations had been significantly disrupted.

## ***2.2 Church and State Preferences and Church-State Relations***

### ***2.2.1 Toward a More Complete Understanding of Church and State Preferences***

While this discussion of church structure highlights the reasons why examining the preferences of churches and states is insufficient for understanding church-state interactions and church political orientations, it is nonetheless necessary to properly identify the preferences of these actors in order to understand the outcomes of their interactions. Therefore, the second goal of this dissertation has been to refine and expand

upon existing understandings of the goals that churches and states bring into their interactions with one another. From the point of view of churches, I argue that the standard view of churches as member and resource maximizing organizations is too simplistic. First, churches as organizations do not simply seek to maximize the raw number of people who can be counted as members of the church, as is evident by the various moral and behavioral strictures that churches place on members. While churches do generally seek to increase their memberships, each church also places value on the degree to which members' beliefs and behaviors conform to the moral and theological tenets of the church. Churches therefore face a tradeoff between gaining more members and gaining more devout and orthodox members – a tradeoff between member quantity and member faithfulness. Churches also seek to maximize resources, though this is generally a secondary goal for many denominations. Focusing on resource accumulation is nevertheless a necessary priority for churches due to the practical expenses of operating and maintaining churches as functioning organizations. Churches also face the necessity of expending human and financial resources to win new converts and maintain existing members, both directly through evangelization activities and religious education, and indirectly through service provision.

The second major point of this dissertation concerning church preferences is that the preferences of church leaders are not synonymous with the organizational goals of churches as identified above. This is not to say that a church leader's preferences are completely discordant with those of their organizations; on the contrary, due to both genuine devotion on the church leader's part and the benefits of leading a successful organization (that is, one that is maximizing its size, resources and the devotion of its

members), a church leader has strong incentives to promote the membership quantity, membership faithfulness and resource accumulation of his church. At the same time, however, a church leader generally values individual benefits such as income, prestige and their own sense of faithfulness to the doctrines in which they believe. Identifying the preferences of organizations with strong leaders therefore involves identifying the preferences of these organizations' leaders, and leader preferences are a mix of organizational and personal goals.

Even though this dissertation focuses on church-state relations by looking at the political orientations of churches, it is important to understand the preferences of governments, since these preferences determine government demand for churches' "products" and shape government policies toward churches, which in turn influence the stances churches adopt. Gill identifies government demand for church support in terms of ideological goods. Governments want churches to espouse obedience and pro-state ideology that will inspire citizens to voluntarily comply with the government's laws and policies and therefore decrease the cost to governments of ruling.<sup>655</sup> While this is one of the "goods" that churches can provide for governments, it is not the only one, and this dissertation identifies two others. In addition to ideology, governments seek church support in order to gain votes and other forms of active political mobilization. Churches can instruct their members on how to vote, and can mobilize members to campaign, and use their infrastructure and human resources to get church members to the polls. This motivation obviously varies according to the political structure of the country at hand, but

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<sup>655</sup> Gill, Anthony. *Rendering unto Caesar: the Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*. University of Chicago Press, 1998: 50-54.

even autocracies often hold elections and other polls – however rigged they may be – and find it useful to be able to mobilize citizens. Finally, in both the developed world and particularly in the developing world, governments rely on organizations like churches to provide social services, taking some of the burden of providing such services off of the government.

### ***2.2.2 The Role of Preferences in Influencing Church-State Interactions***

The preferences identified above were shown to have shaped the political interactions of churches and the Kenyan government throughout the history of the country as an independent state. Founding President Jomo Kenyatta, initially enjoying widespread support and prestige as the living symbol of the independence struggle and the founding father of the nation, had relatively little demand for the ideological support of the churches due to his secular prestige.<sup>656</sup> He instead preferred for the churches to have a quiet voice in politics. The churches, which were often vulnerable to accusations of foreign control or colonial collaboration, were willing to play a quiet, supportive role lest they be painted in a negative light and thus lose members and social standing. Kenyatta's personal popularity, as well as the effective banning of political opposition parties and assassinations of potential rivals, meant that the President faced no significant political threats at the polls and did not need the churches to campaign or garner votes in his favor. Instead, Kenyatta primarily drew upon the churches as partners in development; the young nation needed the churches help in providing health and

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<sup>656</sup> He did draw support from the churches at individual moments of political importance an controversy, such as Catholic Archbishop McCarthy's endorsement of "African Socialism" and Anglican Archbishop Beecher's praise of the government during the political fight with the KPU opposition party.

education services (even after the nationalization of the school system), and the government found the churches useful for drawing in foreign resources that could further the country's economic development. The churches welcomed government cooperation in various service projects, leading to collaborations between church and state that fostered good relations between these actors. As time passed, the churches indigenized their leadership and the government shifted from a maximalist coalition to a more ethnic and patronage-based rule. Some of the churches ventured into moments of mild criticism, but the mutual benefits of good church-state relations were too great to allow any significant break between the major denominations and the government. By maintaining conditions that allowed the churches to both grow in size and educate their members in proper beliefs and practices, and by materially benefiting the churches through cooperation in service work, Kenyatta's policies aligned with church preferences, helping to maintain widespread cordiality in church-state relations.

President Moi, in contrast to his predecessor, tied his public persona to his Christian identity, and desired the churches' help in fostering his image as a servant of God. He thus sought active, vocal ideological support from church leaders. To an even greater extent than President Kenyatta, Moi used authoritarian tactics to suppress political opposition, and thus did not demand that churches mobilize support for the ruling party through votes. Even with democratization in the 1990s, Moi was able to secure his rule through divide-and-rule tactics and politicized ethnic violence, and thus was able to forgo the political support of the largest churches in the country. Unlike Kenyatta, Moi was less concerned with development work, and thus church-initiated development projects became a substitute for government service provision rather than a complement to

government activities.

Moi gained church support from the Africa Inland Church, of which he was a member. For the church, its increased prominence under Moi helped raise the prestige of both the denomination and its leaders. These leaders often had personal relationships with Moi, which brought both access to the President and personal gain for the church leaders. In addition, because the AIC largely drew from Moi's base of supporters in the Rift Valley Province, the church could actively support the president without worrying that its political activities would alienate current or potential members. Though the Seventh-Day Adventist Church did not share regional or ethnic affinities with President Moi, the Church's strict ethical and behavioral code agreed closely with the President's own beliefs and lifestyle, and thus Moi was able to present himself as a defender of the SDA's beliefs, promoting the faithfulness of its members by publicly promoting the Church's beliefs in his rhetoric and through hosting various international SDA events. Moi was also a patron of the SDA in a more traditional fashion, including facilitating the development of an SDA university in Kenya. The President's patronage was institutionalized through the use of harambee fundraisers; an appearance by Moi or one of his top deputies was able to secure millions of shillings at a time, incentivizing the churches to maintain friendly church-state relations. Although Moi and his officials initially used harambees to patronize the larger denominations, the leaderships of the Catholic and Anglican churches became too decentralized and too "expensive" to effectively control, and so the President channeled resources and privileges away from these denominations and toward his preferred church clients. Meanwhile, leaders in the Anglican and Catholic churches were able to gain prestige from their communities by



championing their members' interests in the face of government oppression, and many of these leaders cited moral imperatives to oppose the authoritarian tactics of the government.

President Mwai Kibaki in many ways returned to the strategies of Kenyatta. He came into office with secular sources of legitimacy and thus did not seek much public approval from the churches. Instead, the churches were useful development partners, due to their domestic resources and their ability to draw upon financial and human capital from abroad. This was especially true for Kibaki's own Catholic Church, which remained the largest and most widespread denomination in Kenya and had access to unparalleled development resources from abroad, including missionaries and expatriate members of religious orders. As time drew on, however, Kibaki found himself in need of public support, and specifically votes, during three occasions: the 2005 constitutional referendum, the 2007 presidential election, and the 2010 constitutional referendum. Especially in 2005 and 2007, Kibaki faced strong political opposition and reached out to the churches, especially the larger ones such as the Catholic Church, for support. In contrast, Kibaki was able to secure more than enough political support to approve his proposed constitution in 2010, and thus the government chose to tolerate church opposition rather than make concessions that would mollify religious leaders.

### ***2.2.3 Incompatibilities Between Church and State Preferences and Church-State Conflict***

The existence of member quantity and member faithfulness as distinct goals for churches not only means that tradeoffs sometimes exist between these two goals, but it also means that churches care about the effects of government policies on both of these

goals. During each of the three governments in Kenya, churches faced government policies that the churches saw as threatening both the quantity and faithfulness of their membership, leading to particularly strong reactions from some or most of the major denominations, reactions that cannot be fully understood if churches were only seeking to maximize the number of members. During Jomo Kenyatta's presidency, the churches were faced with the nationalization of their schools, and the Catholic Church reacted in an uncharacteristically strong and publicly critical way to the government takeover of its schools. The Catholic Church, which had the largest network of schools of any denomination at the time of the 1968 government takeover, not only valued control over education as a way of gaining new members from among the student bodies of Catholic schools (as both Catholics and non-Catholics attended these schools), but also saw religious education through the school system as a very important tool for assuring that both new and existing members of the Church knew and understood church doctrine. Because Catholic doctrine is unique and particular, the Catholic Church was especially concerned that guarantees of continued access to schools and religious education be sufficiently tailored to allow continued Catholic education. The government, meanwhile, sought control of the school system as a symbol of independence and effective government, and as a way to inculcate pro-state ideology and support national development goals. The government was willing to risk the temporary ire of the Catholic Church in order to accomplish these goals, and was eventually able to negotiate concessions that pleased the Church.

One year later, when faced with the government's tacit endorsement of forced Kikuyu oaths aimed at compelling loyalty to the Kenyatta government, most of the major

churches participated in public campaigns against the oathing practice. Church members, who objected to the “pagan” oaths on religious grounds, were the victims of violence when they refused to participate. Perhaps a bigger threat to the churches, however, was not violence against those who abstained from the oaths, but rather the compromised faith of those who chose to participate in them. The oaths thus endangered not only the safety of church members, but also their faith in church doctrine, and thus threatened to both decrease church membership and lessen the “quality” of remaining church members who had their allegiances torn between their church and their political and ethnic affiliations. The government either did not foresee the reaction of the churches, or those individuals who wielded political authority (accurately) predicted that the churches’ opposition to the specific phenomenon of oathing would not lead to a permanent break in church-state cooperation due to the sustained mutual benefits of cooperation.

The churches faced a similar threat during the Moi era when the government instituted queue voting as a replacement for secret ballot voting in KANU primary elections, which were particularly important given that only the ruling party was legally allowed to operate in the country. This policy led to the first significant clash between the government and some of the major churches, as objections to the new policy came from the Anglican, Catholic and (to a lesser extent) Presbyterian denominations, which were worried that forcing their members and leaders to publicly declare their political allegiances would lead to major splits within their churches. For other denominations such as the Africa Inland Church and the Seventh-Day Adventist Church, the leaders of these denominations had already publicly allied with the government and were not threatened by engaging in yet another public display of support for President Moi and

KANU. The government valued the ability to control the outcome of elections enough to tolerate drawing objections from the Anglican Church (with which the government already had somewhat strained relations due to the ousting of Charles Njonjo from the government and the outspokenness of the more activist Anglican bishops) and the Catholic Church (which still maintained cordiality with the government generally).

Under President Kibaki, the churches were threatened by the prospect of constitutional reform, which centered on referenda in 2005 and 2010. Though the President and his aides were able to alleviate the fears of the largest churches and church organizations in 2005, Kibaki failed to win enough secular political support to pass constitutional reform. In 2010, the government had enough political will to pass a new constitution, but faced opposition from most of the major churches. These large mainline denominations were faced with competition for members from newer evangelical and Pentecostal churches, which had been taking issue with certain clauses from the 2005 document that had been reproduced in the 2010 draft. The churches also faced competition from the growing presence of Islam (including more radical Muslim influences largely coming from neighboring Somalia), and feared that the proposed constitution unfairly advantaged Islam through its provisions for Islamic civil courts. Beyond the threat of losing members to other Christian denominations or to Islam as a rival religion, the churches also feared that western, liberal principles embodied in many of the new constitution's provisions, such as (implied) abortion rights, were at odds with Christian doctrines and practices and would lead to a general watering down of Christian beliefs and behaviors among the Kenyan population. Thus, again the churches faced threats to both the quantity and faithfulness of their membership, leading to conflictual

church-state relations over these issues. However, much like relations under Kenyatta, the Kibaki government and the churches found value in maintaining cooperation, particularly in development work, and so neither side allowed the clash over the 2010 constitution to expand into more general church-state conflicts.

One commonality of these specific church-state conflicts have been the absence of the Seventh-Day Adventist Church from engaging in the controversies. Due to its theological prohibitions against significant political involvement and ethnic and geographical distance from the center of Kenyan politics, the SDA's preferences diverged from other churches. The SDA had already discovered the practical difficulties of operating schools without government support, and so did not have an incentive to oppose government school takeover in 1968, as long as it was allowed to continue religious education in former SDA schools. Furthermore, the church did not draw much of its membership from the GEMA groups that were involved in the oath-taking controversy, and did not therefore face significant threats to its members. The SDA had already embraced President Moi's patronage by the time of the queue voting controversy of the 1980s, and thus chose not to object to the government's alteration of voting procedures. And the SDA, unlike other denominations, did not see its membership or its specific beliefs threatened by the reforms of the 2010 constitution, and thus had no reason to oppose the document.

These case studies demonstrate that, in addition to the importance of examining church structures, it remains important to properly identify the preferences of churches and governments to fully understand the interactions between these actors and the resultant stances taken by churches. While more centralized churches generally had

better relations with the government, there were individual instances where the preferences of various churches and the government were incompatible, leading to temporary conflicts with even the most centralized denominations. Outside of these specific circumstances, however, the impact of church and government preferences was mediated through the structures of the churches in question.

### **3 Church Political Orientation in Africa: Quantitative Analysis**

The arguments presented in this dissertation have largely been derived from examinations of the case study churches themselves. Although the preceding analyses have offered further evidence of the arguments' validity and elaborated upon the mechanisms by which church structure influences church political activity, focusing solely on these five churches leaves open the question of external validity. To examine the larger validity and applicability of these arguments, the next section presents an "out of sample" statistical analysis of church political support for governments across Africa since independence. I have gathered data for various Christian denominations in thirty-four African countries from independence until 2011.<sup>657</sup> This represents the universe of cases in which at least one church (national-level Christian denomination) has had adherents equal to at least five percent of the country's population at some point between independence and 2011.<sup>658</sup> For each country, I examine the relationship between each

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<sup>657</sup> For most of the countries in the dataset, independence is defined as the end of colonial or white rule. The following cases of less obvious independence dates are as follows: Ethiopia, 1974; Liberia, 1980; Namibia, 1990; South Africa, 1994; Zimbabwe, 1980.

<sup>658</sup> Despite meeting the criteria for inclusion in the dataset, one country – Chad, – completely drop out of the sample due to missing data. Data on the number of church adherents across time gathered from the dataset compiled by Mandryk, Jason. *Operation*

successive government that has operated within the country and the largest church that existed within the country during that government's time in power.<sup>659</sup> The data equates governments with heads of state, in keeping with the strong presidential systems that characterize African governments.<sup>660</sup> Thus, the unit of analysis is the Church-President dyad.<sup>661</sup> Except in rare instances in which a country has had only one leader since independence, this procedure produces multiple observations for each country.<sup>662</sup>

### ***3.1 Dependent Variable: Church Political Orientation***

The dependent variable for my analysis is a trichotomous measure of church political orientation equaling '1' if a church was supportive of the government during the period in question, '0' if the church was neutral or participated in politics in a non-partisan way, and '-1' if the church was critical or oppositional. Measuring the political orientation of churches is a complicated and necessarily subjective process, and I have used a wide range of sources to code this variable. When possible, I have relied on official statements released by a church's national leaders. For example, one of the

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*World: The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation*. Biblica Europe; 7th edition October 2010.

<sup>659</sup> I exclude short-lived governments, defined as those in which a head of state was in office for less than two years.

<sup>660</sup> See Van de Walle, Nicolas. "Presidentialism and Clientelism in Africa's Emerging Party Systems." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 41.02 (2003): 309-311.

<sup>661</sup> For example, the orientation of the Kenyan Catholic Church to President Jomo Kenyatta is treated as one observation, the Catholic Church-President Moi dyad as a second observation, and the Catholic Church-President Kibaki dyad as a third observation.

<sup>662</sup> The dataset considers Zimbabwe to have achieved independence in 1980, and thus identifies Robert Mugabe as the country's only post-independence leader.

innovations that arose from the Catholic Church's Second Vatican Council was the creation of Episcopal Conferences, formal organizations of all the Catholic bishops and archbishops of a particular country that they decide upon national church policy and craft statements on relevant national issues.<sup>663</sup> These statements often take the form of Pastoral Letters, written in the name of all the bishops or signed by the president of the conference, who is elected from among the bishops for a fixed term. .

I also look at the statements made by national Church leaders as reported in various news sources and publications. For churches with only one top national leader, such as the patriarch of an Orthodox church, the statements of that leader are taken as official statements of the church's position, as are any statements clearly authorized by the national leader. Given that Archbishop is the highest office within the Catholic Church in a particular country, Archbishop statements are taken as representing the Catholic Church's official stance or that country. When multiple Archbishops exist within a single country, all of their statements are taken as official. The president of a national Catholic Episcopal Conference is also considered a top national leader, and his statements likewise represent official church policy. Except when speaking on behalf of an Episcopal conference or with clear authorization from an archbishop, I generally do not include statements made by other bishops (who are known as suffragan bishops) as official Church statements, as such bishops are generally viewed as subordinate to the Archbishops in their countries in terms of Church authority, despite the freedom given to bishops to express their own views. I also do not rely on statements released by the Vatican or by the Vatican's diplomatic representatives within a country as indicative of

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<sup>663</sup> Smaller countries are occasionally grouped together or paired with larger countries, such as the Conferência Episcopal de Angola e São Tomé.



the stance of the Catholic Church in that country, as the opinions coming from Rome may differ from those of the national-level hierarchy. In addition to official Church statements, I also rely on a number of secondary sources for each country that describe the attitude or actions of the Churches toward a particular government.

Using these various sources, I label a Church's orientation toward a particular government as either supportive (1), neutral/mixed (0) or oppositional (-1). These three categories are interpreted as follows. Churches are categorized as *Supportive (1)* if they offer significant amounts of praise for the President or government, going beyond minor congratulations or acknowledgement of government accomplishments. Archbishops or church spokesmen may make statements directly extolling the President or government, as well as criticizing opposition parties and opponents of the incumbent. In electoral contexts, support includes statements indicating a preference for the incumbent president or party to be re-elected over challengers. Support for government may also be indirectly given by expressing opinions on controversial political issues that are in line with the stances taken by the incumbent government.<sup>664</sup>

Churches are considered *Neutral (0)* if they are neither supportive of government nor critical/oppositional. Neutrality combines three scenarios:

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<sup>664</sup> For example, during the 2007 presidential race in Kenya, Archbishop John Njue of the Nairobi archdiocese strongly condemned a proposal to institute a system of federalism known as *majimbo*. This was widely seen as an endorsement of the incumbent President Mwai Kibaki, as the president opposed the proposed system while his main challenger favored the reform. Another Kenyan Archbishop, Zacchaeus Okoth, took the unusual step of clarifying that Njue's statements were personal opinion and not the official view of the Kenya Episcopal Conference. This political disagreement had an ethnic dimension. Kibaki and Njue belonged to the Kikuyu ethnic group; Okoth was a Luo, as was the main contender for the presidency and proponent of *majimbo*, Raila Odinga.

A) The Church is neutral between government and opposition, expressing no support or opposition to any side. Neutrality need not be explicit declared, as a Church may simply decline to issue statements or take actions on partisan issues. Furthermore, explicit declarations of neutrality are not sufficient to be placed in this categorization if other Church statements or actions contradict the neutrality claim by expressing supportive or oppositional views.

B) The Church expresses mixed opinions. This can be either simultaneous, with multiple leaders having different views on the same issue, or over time, if the Church fluctuates between support and opposition (instances where the Church trends from one position to another without reversal are discussed below).

C) The Church is involved in politics in a non-partisan way. This generally takes the form of activities such as mediation between rival factions, non-partisan civic education or voter registration. These activities must not be performed in a way that indicates a clear preference for one party prevailing over another.

A Church is deemed *Oppositional (-1)* if it is critical on many issues and/or on a fundamental issue, such as democratization or human rights abuses. An oppositional Church may advocate for a change in government. This includes, but is not limited to, supporting particular opposition parties or movements. This category does not include instances where Churches have generally cordial relationships with government but have very occasional disagreements on particular, doctrine-specific issue (such as birth control).

It is often the case that the Church initially seeks to be neutral or supportive but becomes increasingly critical as circumstances within the country change. There are also

instances in which an initially hostile Church becomes more supportive over time. In instances where the political orientation trends over time from one position to another, without subsequent reversal, I use the position at the end of the time period to determine the Church's orientation. When political orientation changes multiple times, for instance going from supportive to critical to supportive again, this is coded as mixed and thus neutral.

One of the most conceptually difficult parts of the project concerns how coding the dependent variable in instances where there does not appear to be data. Lack of statements from the Church during a particular regime, coupled with absence of secondary commentary on the Church's stance, could simply be missing data, or it may indicate that the Church took a neutral stance and refrained from politics during this time. The analysis deals with these cases by adopting the following rule. For countries in which the Church's stance is clear for a majority of the governments in the dataset, the Church is coded as Neutral concerning those governments for which no information on Church orientation is available. This is done based on the assumption that if the political stances of a church have been recorded for most of the governments that have operated within a country, the absence of political statements for the remaining governments of that country indicate that the church refrained from making such statements concerning these latter governments. When church statements are absent for the majority of the governments that have existed in a country, those dyads for which no information exist are simply dropped from the dataset. Instances where there are statements from the Church that are too ambiguous to classify, or where secondary sources disagree on the Church's stance, are also treated as missing data and dropped from the analysis.

### ***3.2 Independent Variables***

The main variable of interest, church structure, is multifaceted. For the purpose of this analysis, I focus on leadership centralization, which is a dummy variable CENTRALIZATION for whether only one individual occupied the top leadership position within a national-level denomination during the years covered within a given observation (i.e. the term of the country's president).<sup>665</sup> For churches like the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, for example, one individual, the Church's Patriarch, occupies the top leadership position. For many Catholic churches, in contrast, there may be several archbishops operating within a country, and all are of equal formal rank within the Catholic hierarchy. In addition, as described in previous chapters, national Catholic denominations elect one of their bishops to head their national Episcopal Conferences. When the selected bishop is not one of the archbishops, his selection effectively adds another national leader to the church, and thus Episcopal Conference Presidents are also included in the count of national leaders for the Catholic churches in the dataset.<sup>666</sup>

A simple bivariate regression shows a strong relationship between the basic measure of centralization and support for the government.<sup>667</sup> The dataset contains 116

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<sup>665</sup> The data does not currently allow independent tests of the claims made in Arguments 2 and 3 raised in the first chapter of this dissertation, as the accountability systems in place for most of the churches in the dataset are too similar to differentiate.

<sup>666</sup> An individual is only counted once, however, if he is both an archbishop within the Catholic Church and the president of his Episcopal Conference.

<sup>667</sup> The bivariate regression of the centralization dummy on the trichotomous measure of church support gives a point estimate of 0.44 with a standard error of 0.12 and a p-value of 0.003. Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Olivia Lau. 2014. "Is: Least Squares Regression for Continuous Dependent Variables" in Kosuke Imai, Gary King, and Olivia Lau, "Zelig: Everyone's Statistical Software," <http://gking.harvard.edu/zelig>

church-government dyads, and just over one-third of the dyads (43) feature churches that were centralized for the duration of the governments with which they are paired. Of these 116 dyads, 16 of them feature church support for the incumbent government, and an overwhelming number of these supportive churches (12/16 observations) were centralized. In contrast, centralized churches account for only 39% of the neutral churches (24/62 observations) and only 18% of the oppositional churches (7/38 observations). As the data shows, centralization is not a sufficient condition for churches to support government, as most of the centralized churches were neutral. However, centralized churches in the data were almost twice as likely to be supportive than oppositional.

As discussed previously, a church seeks to maximize the quantity and faithfulness of its members and the resources that the church owns or controls. The government can influence church membership and resources in a number of ways. A government can benefit a given church by elevating the denomination to official state church or a similar privileged status, banning rival denominations, favoring the church and its clergy in public functions, providing subsidies and tax exemptions to the church, and promoting beliefs and behaviors consistent with the church's theology through laws and public statements. Conversely, a government can be detrimental to the goals of a church by restricting or banning the denomination, excluding the church and its clergy from public functions, placing onerous taxes or regulations on the church, denouncing the tenets of the church and promoting beliefs and behaviors that are incompatible with the theology of the church in question. Existing data does not allow me to directly test government

policies in these areas.<sup>668</sup> However, I include measures of several variables that may be indicative of government policies toward religion and specific religious organizations. For each church-government dyad, I include a dummy variable DENOMINATION MATCH for whether or not the country's President is a member of the church in the dyad, since it stands to reason that a President may favor his own denomination over other churches or religious groups, and that a church would therefore be more likely to support its own member as President. I also include a dummy variable MUSLIM for whether the President was Muslim, as Muslim-Christian divides have characterized religious competition in many African nations and such divides have been transformed into political competition as well. Because Islam presents an alternative worldview and set of beliefs to Christianity, churches may fear that Muslim Presidents will promote Islam, which can lead to decreased church membership and less orthodoxy of practice and beliefs among remaining church members. Muslim Presidents may also decrease church resources by channeling state preferences away from Christian organizations. I also include a variable for whether the President identified as Marxist. Though no longer a major issue in African politics, historically Marxism employed an alternative ideology to Christianity, one which was sometimes explicitly hostile toward religion, and churches

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<sup>668</sup> The most comprehensive data sources on international religious freedom tend to only reach as far back as the 1990s or 2000s. For example, the Pew Research Centers' *Global Restrictions on Religion* project examines religious freedom in 198 countries during the years 2006-2008. <http://www.pewforum.org/2009/12/17/methodology/>. The United States Department of State's *Report on International Religious Freedom*, released annually, only goes back to 1999. The Religion and State Project, published by Jonathan Fox as part of the Association of Religion Data Archives (ARDA), covers the years 1990 through 2008. Fox, Jonathan. "The religion and state project." The ARDA. Available (2004).-Minorities Dataset, published by John Fox and Yasemin Akbaba as Akbaba, Y. and Fox, J. (2011) 'The Religion and State-Minorities Dataset', *Journal of Peace Research*, 48 (6), 807-16.

also clashed with Marxist governments over expropriation of church property, although non-Marxist governments have also carried out such policies.

The most controversial targets of government expropriation in Africa, as well as other regions such as Latin America, have been church schools. Governments have taken over control of previously church-dominated school systems in order to control national development and inculcate nationalistic values in citizens. For churches, however, losing control of church schools is a particularly threatening development. Not only are the school buildings and land valuable physical resources, but education is also a very important tool by which churches gain new members and teach existing members right beliefs and practices. Controlling the education system is thus important for all three of the church's goals (maximizing member quantity, member faithfulness, and church resources), and governments that threaten the church's ability to control education should face church opposition. I thus include a dummy variable `SCHOOLS NATIONALIZED` for whether or not the government nationalized some or all of the country's previously church-run education system.

While relatively few studies have focused on the determinants of church political orientation generally, much more work has been done on the relationships between religion in general, or Christianity in particular, and democracy. While this study does not make church attitudes concerning democracy the dependent variable, as in other works, the degree of democracy in a country may influence church political orientation towards incumbent governments.<sup>669</sup> Various authors have posited links between Protestantism and

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<sup>669</sup> See, for example, Philpott, Daniel. "Explaining the Political Ambivalence of Religion." *American Political Science Review* 101.03 (2007): 505-525.

democracy, offering reasons why the ideas of equality inherent in Protestant theology and practice make this strand of Christianity particularly compatible with democratic politics.<sup>670</sup> Huntington famously noted that “the third wave [of democratization] of the 1970s and 1980s was overwhelmingly a Catholic wave.”<sup>671</sup> As noted previously, Huntington attributes this largely to pro-democracy reforms within the Catholic Church brought about by the Second Vatican Council in the mid 1960s. Thus, both mainline Protestantism and post-Vatican II Catholicism are viewed as generally supportive of democratic forms of government, though works such as Gill (1998) demonstrate that churches’ support for democracy over authoritarianism is far from uniform. Variation notwithstanding, the literature suggests a preference for democracy among both mainline Protestant and Catholic churches. Other Christian denominations, such as newer Evangelical and Pentecostal denominations, have displayed more ambiguous attitudes towards democracy.<sup>672</sup> “In general”, argues Gifford (1995), “it could be said that it is the mainline churches that have challenged Africa’s dictators; the newer evangelical and Pentecostal churches that have provided the support,” though Ranger (same volume), argued that the attitudes of Evangelical and Pentecostal churches toward democracy were more varied.<sup>673</sup> Though churches are far from uniform in support for democracy, the bulk

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<sup>670</sup> For overviews see Freston, Paul. “Christianity: Protestantism” in Haynes, Jeffrey, ed. *Routledge Handbook of Religion and Politics*. Routledge. 2009: 32-33, 36-37.

<sup>671</sup> Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1993: 76

<sup>672</sup> See Freston, Paul. “Evangelical Protestantism and Democratization in Contemporary Latin America and Asia.” *Democratization*. Vol 11, No. 4. 2004: 21-41.

<sup>673</sup> Gifford, Paul, ed. *The Christian Churches and the Democratisation of Africa*. E.J. Brill. 1995: 5.



of the literature suggests a preference for democratic forms of government. “While regime illegitimacy is not a sufficient condition for an oppositional church,” write Johnston and Figa, “it does increase the doctrinal and popular pressure for the church to exercise its unique privileges in favor of social and political change. Thus, the church’s oppositional potential seems to be inversely linked with the regime’s legitimacy.”<sup>674</sup> I therefore include a variable, DEMOCRACY, which gives the average democracy score for each country during the time period covered in a given dyad, using the 21-point measure of democracy included in the Polity IV dataset.<sup>675</sup>

It is difficult to study modern African politics without dealing with questions concerning ethnicity. This dissertation recognizes the salience of ethnicity in politics even in the context of religious organizations and leaders. All else being equal, I assume that religious leaders will be more likely to support governments headed by members of the same ethnic groups as the majority (or a significant minority) of their church’s members, and these church leaders will more likely oppose governments when political opposition in the country is associated with church members’ co-ethnics. This influence

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<sup>674</sup> Johnston, Hank and Figa, Jozef. “The Church and Political Opposition: Comparative Perspectives on Mobilization against Authoritarian Regimes.” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. Vol 27, No 1. Mar 1988: 32-47.

<sup>675</sup> Because Polity scores are based on the political situation in a country are based on the political situation existing at the end of a given year, I do not include the final year of a presidency when calculating the average polity score, except for governments that were still in office on December 31, 2010, the last day covered in the Polity dataset. For countries in which the Polity score is missing for some years, I average the years for which data exists. Polity IV does not provide any information for \_ countries in my sample, and these observations are dropped from all regressions that include the DEMOCRACY score due to the missing data. Marshall, Monty G., and Keith Jaggers. "Polity IV Project: Political Regime Characteristics and Transitions, 1800-2002." 2002.

of ethnicity works through the composition of a given church (or, for regional leaders such as bishops, the composition of the area over which the leader has jurisdiction). Church leaders may, and often do, simply care about the people under their care and leadership, even those they don't personally know. But even if it were the case that church leaders do not have genuine concern for members, church leaders may suffer reproof from these communities if the latter feel their interests are not being properly served<sup>676</sup>. Parishioners who feel that the church or its leaders are not sufficiently promoting the interests of the local community may switch to another denomination or faith they perceive as more in tuned with the needs of the community, though there may be constraints to doing so. Or, if religious, ethnic, cultural or geographical reasons prevent denomination switching, these dissatisfied members may simply decrease their devotion (in terms of monetary and other contributions). To capture these dynamics, I include a dummy variable REGION MATCH, measuring '1' if the Province/State where the President was born is one of the three Provinces/States in the country with the largest number of affiliates of the Church in question, and equaling '0' otherwise. Ideally, I would also include a measure of ethnic affiliation, but the data does not currently allow me to include this alternative measure.

Turning to the point of view of the government, rulers look to churches to provide pro-state ideology, which lowers the cost of ruling by inspiring voluntary compliance among citizens. Rulers also seek church support in order to secure votes, and to provide

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<sup>676</sup> For ethnic groups sanctioning elites, see Bates, Robert H. "Modernization, Ethnic Competition, and the Rationality of Politics in Contemporary Africa." in Rothchild, Donald S., and Victor A. Olorunsola, eds. *State versus Ethnic Claims: African Policy Dilemmas*. Westview Press, 1983: 161-163.

social services. The degree to which these motives guide government preferences vis-à-vis churches varies based on the political system and climate of a given country. The government's demand for churches to provide legitimacy and promote obedience will be less if the government has alternative sources of legitimacy and inspiration. The usefulness of churches in mobilizing votes will be less in a political system in which votes are unnecessary or less important. And the demand for church-provided social services will lessen as the government's resources and capacities to provide such services increase.

Argument 4 holds that governments seek to cooperate with churches for social service provision in order to lessen the burden on governments to provide these services directly, and churches likewise seek government subsidies and cooperation for service and development projects. All else being equal, churches with greater capacities for social service provision make more attractive partners to governments, and these churches are therefore more likely to be able to come to mutually beneficial arrangements with their governments, lessening the probability of church-state conflict. To proxy church capacity, I include CHURCH SIZE, a measure of church membership as a percentage of the population at the beginning of the president's term.<sup>677</sup> While church

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<sup>677</sup> Membership data, drawn from the Operation World dataset, is recorded at five-year intervals, and so I use the first the population data that is chronologically closest to the start date of the dyad, which is the same as the beginning of the term for the head of state. For example, for a dyad beginning in 1967, I use Operation World membership data for 1965, whereas a dyad beginning in 1968 would use 1970 data. Focusing on membership at the beginning of a president's term helps to avoid endogeneity, as church growth during a term may be related to a church's political stands. While I used Operation World's more inclusive measure of church adherents to determine which church was the largest during the term of each head of state, I use the more restrictive measure of membership as a proxy for church adherents. While adherents, that is all those who identify as following the doctrine of a particular church, are important for the overall

size is used as a measure of the supply of church-provided social services, government's must also have a demand for these church-provided services. As a rough approximation of government capacity, I include the natural log of the per capita GDP (LN PER CAPITA GDP) of the country for the period covered in each observation, based on the assumption that the governments of poorer countries will have less resources with which to provide social services and have greater incentive to turn to churches to help serve the population.

As a control, I include a measure of the natural logs of the countries population at the beginning of the period covered in each dyad (LN POPULATION). Also included are variables indicating whether the President was the first head of state for the nation post-independence (FOUNDING FATHER), which may decrease a church's willingness to oppose the government, lest the church lose popularity among the local population.<sup>678</sup>

### ***3.3 Results and Robustness Checks***

I test the relationship between the trichotomous political orientation variable and the independent variables described above using a basic ordinary least squares model.<sup>679</sup> The results of the regressions are shown in Table 5.1 below. Model (1) includes all the variables described above. The estimate for the CENTRALIZATION variable is in the

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societal influence of a church, church-administered social service provisions and development works are more likely to be handled by those who hold formal membership within a particular church, making membership a better indicator of church capacity.

<sup>678</sup> The prestige associated with being a founding father may, however, lessen the incentive of a government to seek church support, which would result in a negative relationship between founder status and church support. The expected sign of this variable is thus ambiguous.

<sup>679</sup> All regression run using the Zelig package in R. version 3.0.2.

expected direction and highly significant, indicating that churches with only one leader are more likely to be supportive of governments than churches with multiple leaders. The only other variables that attain statistical significance in the regression are CHURCH SIZE and LN POPULATION. Larger churches are more likely to support the government, consistent with the reasoning stated above that governments more actively seek the support of larger churches. The result for the population variable also indicates that church support is more likely in larger countries. The other variables are insignificant. Model (1) does not take into account the fact that for nearly 90% of the observations in the dataset, the church is Catholic. Furthermore, church structure is correlated with denomination, as all of the non-Catholic churches in the dataset are centralized. Model (2) replicates the previous model with the addition of a dummy variable CATHOLIC. Including the CATHOLIC variable decreases but does not eliminate the significance of the CENTRALIZATION, CHURCH SIZE and LN POPULATION variables, while the other independent variables remain insignificant. Because of concerns for degrees of freedom, which are exacerbated by the fact that some of the independent variables suffer from missing data, Model (3) excludes the independent variables that are neither significant in the previous models nor significant in bivariate regressions (SCHOOLS NATIONALIZED, DEMOCRACY, REGION MATCH and FOUNDING FATHER). The streamlined model retains the significance of the main variable of interest, CENTRALIZATION, as well as CHURCH SIZE and LN POPULATION. In addition, the MUSLIM PRESIDENT variable remains negative, as expected, and gains marginal significance in this specification. Model (4) adds decade fixed effects to the previous model. CENTRALIZATION remains significant, though at

a lower level, while the estimates of CHURCH SIZE and LN POPULATION also retain their significance but MUSLIM PRESIDENT becomes insignificant again.

**Table 5.1.**  
Political Orientation<sup>a</sup>  
Coefficients (Std. Errors)

Variable	(1) OLS	(2) OLS	(3) OLS	(4) OLS
CENTRALIZATION	0.59 (0.17)***	0.44 (0.20)*	0.46 (0.18)*	0.37 (0.22)†
DENOMINATION MATCH	0.26 (0.16)	0.25 (0.16)	0.20 (0.14)	0.22 (0.14)
MUSLIM PRESIDENT	-0.29 (0.23)	-0.34 (0.24)	-0.39 (0.21)†	-0.33 (0.22)
MARXIST PRESIDENT	-0.01 (0.23)	-0.01 (0.23)	-0.12 (0.20)	-0.04 (0.22)
SCHOOLS NATIONALIZED	0.06 (0.23)	0.06 (0.23)		
DEMOCRACY	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)		
REGION MATCH	-0.21 (0.15)	-0.25 (0.16)		
CHURCH SIZE	1.72 (0.77)*	1.54 (0.78)†	1.18 (0.67)†	1.28 (0.74)†
LN POPULATION	0.20 (0.07)**	0.16 (0.07)*	0.18 (0.07)**	0.16 (0.08)*
LN PER CAPITA GDP	0.13 (0.10)	0.11 (0.10)	0.10 (0.08)	0.10 (0.09)
FOUNDING FATHER	0.16 (0.18)	0.12 (0.18)		
CATHOLIC CHURCH		-0.37 (0.27)	-0.32 (0.25)	-0.34 (0.30)
Decade Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
N	86	86	94	94

Significance codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '†' 0.1 '.' 1

<sup>a</sup>DV=Trichotomous variable =1 if church supports government in church-government dyad, 0 if church is neutral or non-partisan, and -1 if church opposes government or supports opposition.

The above analyses are based on a trichotomous dependent variable, which can take values of either 1 (support), 0 (neutrality or mixed) or -1 (opposition). Some works, however, identify church neutrality with tacit support for a given government and its

policies.<sup>680</sup> This view implies that the distinction between support and neutrality is not substantively important, and that neutral churches should be considered as supportive of their governments. The regressions summarized in Table 5.2 conform to this point of view by combining the support and neutrality categories into a single category, assigning a 1 to all such cases. Church opposition is labeled 0. Thus, these regressions are more specifically models of the determinants of active church opposition, examining the cases in which churches have explicitly opposed governments against the cases in which churches offer support, whether active or tacit, to the incumbent head of state. The independent variables are the same as in those used in the models shown in Table 5.1. Because the dependent variable is now dichotomous, I use the logit function in Zelig for all the models in Table 5.2. As seen below, the CENTRALIZATION variable is initially significant, as seen in Model (5), but loses significance when the CATHOLIC variable is added to the equation in Model (6). The coefficient for MUSLIM PRESIDENT maintains its expected negative sign but now gains significance. REGION MATCH also gains significance but with a negative coefficient, running counter to prediction.

These results suggest that church structure does not play a strong role in the specific decision to actively oppose or criticize a sitting government, particularly among Catholic churches, which make up the vast majority of the denominations in the dataset. Furthermore, consistent with predictions, Christian churches are more likely to actively oppose Muslim presidents. The results for REGION MATCH are more puzzling,

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<sup>680</sup> Gill (1998), for example, uses this dichotomous framework in his analysis of the political stances of the Catholic Church in Latin America. Gill, Anthony. *Rendering unto Caesar: the Catholic Church and the State in Latin America*. University of Chicago Press, 1998.

<b>Table 5.2</b>				
Political Orientation <sup>a</sup>				
Coefficients (Std. Errors)				
Variable	(5) Logit	(6) Logit	(7) Logit	(8) Logit
CENTRALIZATION	1.40 (0.68)*	0.68 (0.83)	0.54 (0.67)	-0.71 (0.92)
DENOMINATION	0.87 (0.62)	0.86 (0.63)	0.81 (0.62)	1.23 (0.70)†
MUSLIM	-1.86 (0.99)†	-2.09 (1.02)*	-1.96 (0.95)*	-2.76 (1.17)*
PRESIDENT	0.13 (0.81)	0.07 (0.82)		
MARXIST	-0.68 (0.85)	-0.65 (0.85)	-0.44 (0.79)	-0.40 (0.89)
SCHOOLS	0.08 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)	0.05 (0.08)
NATIONALIZED	-1.13 (0.59)†	-1.25 (0.60)*	-1.20 (0.57)*	-1.66 (0.67)*
REGION MATCH	3.28 (3.07)	1.63 (3.38)		
CHURCH SIZE	0.44 (0.30)	0.21 (0.35)		
LN POPULATION	0.85 (0.44)†	0.70 (0.44)	0.54 (0.35)	0.86 (0.42)*
LN PER CAPITA	0.99 (0.80)	0.74 (0.81)		
GDP		-2.13 (1.61)	-2.66 (1.44)†	-4.16 (1.96)*
FOUNDING				
FATHER				
CATHOLIC				
CHURCH				
Decade Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
N	88	88	88	88

Significance codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '†' 0.1 ' ' 1

<sup>a</sup>DV=Dichotomous variable =1 if church supports government in church-government, church is neutral or church is non-partisan, and 0 if church opposes government or supports opposition.

suggesting that churches based in a President's home region are actually more likely to oppose him than those based outside of his home. Though region is an admittedly imprecise proxy for ethnic affinity, the consistently significant results in the regressions indicate that the region variable is picking up a genuine factor influencing church opposition. It is not immediately obvious why presidents from a church's base region



would be more likely to earn the ire of the church. It is possible that these churches' positions give them privilege access to public forums and political space and therefore give them greater opportunities to be critical than are afforded to churches in marginalized regions. It may also be that presidents feel they can rely on the citizens of their home regions for support and have less need to court the support of churches in these regions.

Table 5.3 presents a similar set of regressions using a dichotomous dependent variable. This time, however, the modified outcome variable is created by combining the neutral and opposition categories of the original trichotomous variable, assigning 0 to observations that fall into either of these categories, while continuing to score active church support for government as 1. This is a more specific model of active church support as distinct from other forms of church political activity. The regressions in Table 5.3 thus test the specific instances in which churches are vocal in their support for governments against all other church political orientations. Since actively endorsing a sitting government could potentially endanger a church's reputation (as well as its ability to draw and maintain members and donations) should that government lose credibility or popularity, it is important to understand the circumstances under which a church would undertake such an action. CENTRALIZATION is again significant in these regressions, at a higher level than in the initial OLS regressions. This implies that centralized churches, those with a single individual in the top national leadership position, are more likely to actively support incumbent governments, consistent with the main argument of this dissertation. As noted earlier, 12 of the 16 observations of active church support in the dataset involve centralized churches. CHURCH SIZE is also positive and statistically

**Table 5.3**  
Political Orientation<sup>a</sup>  
Coefficients (Std. Errors)

Variable	(1) Logit	(2) Logit	(3) Logit	(4) Logit
CENTRALIZATION	5.47 (2.01)**	5.51 (2.08)**	0.54 (0.67)	-0.71 (0.92)
DENOMINATION	1.47 (1.27)	1.46 (1.27)	0.81 (0.62)	1.23 (0.70)†
MUSLIM	-0.73 (2.03)	-0.71 (2.06)	-1.96 (0.95)*	-2.76 (1.17)*
PRESIDENT	-2.75 (2.19)	-2.74 (2.19)		
MARXIST				
PRESIDENT				
SCHOOLS	2.77 (1.67)†	2.74 (1.73)	-0.44 (0.79)	-0.40 (0.89)
NATIONALIZED	0.17 (0.14)	0.17 (0.15)	0.08 (0.06)	0.05 (0.08)
DEMOCRACY	-0.002 (1.28)	0.03 (1.37)	-1.20 (0.57)*	-1.66 (0.67)*
REGION MATCH				
CHURCH SIZE	10.03 (5.42)†	10.15 (5.74)†		
LN POPULATION	1.66 (0.74)*	1.67 (0.78)*		
LN PER CAPITA	-0.19 (0.88)	-0.17 (0.94)	0.54 (0.35)	0.86 (0.42)*
GDP				
FOUNDING	-0.79 (1.52)	-0.77 (1.55)		
FATHER				
CATHOLIC		0.12 (1.75)	-2.66 (1.44)†	-4.16 (1.96)*
CHURCH				
Decade Fixed Effects	No	No	No	Yes
N	86	86	88	88

Significance codes: 0 '\*\*\*' 0.001 '\*\*' 0.01 '\*' 0.05 '†' 0.1 ' ' 1

<sup>a</sup>DV=Dichotomous variable =1 if church supports government in church-government, and 0 if church is neutral, church is non-partisan, church opposes government or church supports opposition.

significant in this set of regressions, which is consistent with the argument that governments seek the active cooperation and collaboration with larger churches. LN POPULATION is also positive and significant.

#### **4 Church Structure and Political Orientation: A Brief Survey of African Churches**

**4.1 Internal Structure and Political Orientation of Catholic Churches** The Catholic Church has consistently been the largest Christian denomination in Africa, and eight out of every nine dyads in the dataset used above involve a national Catholic Church. The Catholic Church's roles in African politics have been varied, as noted by the mixed results on the CATHOLIC variable in the regressions described above. Anecdotes abound of national Catholic Churches taking leading roles in political opposition, such as the Catholic bishops of Malawi breaking the political silence by criticizing Hastings Banda, or the Kenyan Catholic hierarchy taking up the cause against President Moi in the 1990s. The Catholic Church has also often served a neutral role, such as mediating between conflicting political parties or armed groups.<sup>681</sup> In still other cases, the Catholic Church has developed close ties to incumbent governments and offered support and legitimacy to existing regimes; the Church most notoriously served this role before and even during the 1994 Rwandan genocide.<sup>682</sup> Looking at the Catholic subset of the data, centralized Catholic Churches comprise a majority of the Catholic Churches that actively supported governments (5/9). Of the four decentralized cases of supportive Catholic churches, three of them – Presidents Zafy (1993-1996) and Rajoelina (2009-2011) of Madagascar, and Obasanjo (1976-1979) of Nigeria – involved a specific scenario: the Catholic Church supporting short-lived or transition governments that had come into office after

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<sup>681</sup> The national Catholic Churches of a number of Francophone countries served in this role by volunteering bishops to chair national conferences for political reform during the late 1980s and early 1990s. Gifford, Paul. "Some Recent Developments in African Christianity." *African Affairs*. 1994: 513.

<sup>682</sup> Longman, Timothy. *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*. Vol. 112. Cambridge University Press, 2009. 7, 153, 174.

partnering with the Church in political opposition against a previous repressive regime. In contrast to the supportive churches, only one third of the Catholic Churches that remained neutral (19/57) were centralized, and a mere 16% of those that opposed the government (6/37) were centralized churches. While this obviously shows that centralization is not a sufficient condition for church support, it seems to be almost a necessary condition outside of very specific political conditions.

#### ***4.2 Internal Structure and Political Orientation of Orthodox Churches***

Meanwhile, the non-Catholic Churches were uniformly centralized, and tended to be supportive and rarely oppositional. In only 14 observations, covering 7 denominations in 7 countries, was a non-Catholic Church the largest denomination. Seven of these fourteen cases feature active church support for the government, and only one of these cases (the Egyptian Coptic Church under President Anwar Sadat) feature church opposition, as will be discussed below. Nearly half of the fourteen non-Catholic observations involve churches belonging to the branch of Christianity known as Oriental Orthodox: the Ethiopian Orthodox Church under Presidents Menghistu and Meles; the Eritrean Orthodox Church under President Afewerki; and the (Egyptian) Coptic Orthodox Church under presidents Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak. The second category of non-Catholic churches in the data include two denominations with largely African origins and leadership: The Zion Christian Church (ZCC), which has been the largest South African denomination under Presidents Mandela, Mbeki and Zuma; and the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa (ZOAGA), which has been the largest church of the presidency of Robert Mugabe. The ZCC, the largest of the various African-Initiated Churches that cover southern Africa, gained political notoriety during the Apartheid era

for remaining neutral to the political situation and publicly maintaining friendly relationships with the white-dominated governments.<sup>683</sup> The Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa has its roots in the works of South African and Western missionaries to Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), but has essentially operated as an African initiated church since the ZOAGA group and its charismatic leader, Ezekiel Guti, were kicked out of the last of its missionary parent groups in 1967.<sup>684</sup> The third group of non-Catholic churches are missionary-derived Protestant denominations: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), which grew out of a Finnish mission to the north of the country, and the Botswana branch of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA), a denomination which traces its origins to the London Missionary Society and currently spans five countries in southern Africa.<sup>685</sup>

The Orthodox Churches were heavily supportive of the government. In 4 of the 6 Orthodox dyads, the church was actively supportive of the government in power. In one case, the Eritrean Orthodox Church under President Afewerki, the Church has remained politically neutral. In only one instance, the Egyptian Coptic Church under President Sadat, did the Church leadership publicly break with the government. Examining the

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<sup>683</sup> For example, on more than one occasion, the president of South Africa was invited to participate in the ZCC's holiest event, an annual Easter pilgrimage to the Church's headquarters in Moria. Anderson, Allan H. "The Lekganyanes and Prophecy in the Zion Christian Church." *Journal of Religion in Africa* (1999): 292-294.

<sup>684</sup> Guti's group was expelled from the South African-based Apostolic Faith Mission in 1959, and joined the Canadian Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada mission, only to be expelled from the latter in 1967.

<sup>685</sup> Ejikeme, Anene. *Culture and Customs of Namibia*. ABC-CLIO, 2011: 42; Benedetto, Robert, and Donald K. McKim. *Historical Dictionary of the Reformed Churches*. Vol. 99. Scarecrow Press, 2009.

internal organization of the Orthodox churches and the history of church-state relations in these countries, it is clear that the Orthodox Church structures influence the political stances of the churches by allowing the government to coopt or coerce the churches' top leader. Like the Catholic and Anglican churches, the Orthodox churches operate according to an "episcopal" structure, in which religious authority is vested in individual clergy organized in a hierarchical structure of archbishops, bishops and priests. At the head of each national Orthodox Church is a single Patriarch who is generally selected for life to lead the church. The office of Patriarch thus creates a single official with whom governments can negotiate, and who can be targeted by the government for rewards or punishments based on his political stances. Furthermore, because the Orthodox churches are not part of a larger transnational body like the Catholic Church, governments have greater opportunity to manipulate the selection or tenure of Patriarchs, who have no religious superiors to whom they must report.

In all three countries, governments have intervened in choosing the leadership of the Orthodox Church. The Egyptian Coptic Patriarch is selected at random from a group of three candidates chosen by an electoral body comprising various bishops and lay representatives of the Church.<sup>686</sup> This procedure was not an ancient tradition of the Church; rather it was initiated in 1957 by the Nasser regime after the government had deposed the sitting Patriarch, whose old age and ineffectual leadership had created violent divisions within the Coptic Church.<sup>687</sup> Although the candidate selection procedure

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<sup>686</sup> O'Mahony, Anthony, and Emma Loosley, eds. *Eastern Christianity in the Modern Middle East*. Routledge, 2009: 74.

<sup>687</sup> Pennington, J. D. "The Copts in modern Egypt." *Middle Eastern Studies* 18.2 (1982): 163-167.

is representative and thus reflects the desires of the Coptic membership and clergy, once the Patriarch is elected, he cannot be removed from office by the Church, limiting the degree to which he is accountable to the membership or subordinate clergy.<sup>688</sup> In theory, the Patriarch has to take into account the advice of a lay council called the *majlis al-milli*, but in practice this body has grown weaker vis-à-vis the Patriarch since Nasser's time in office.<sup>689</sup> Although the government generally does not interfere with the Patriarch, it can remove its recognition of the Patriarch.<sup>690</sup> The one substantial instance of an Orthodox Church clashing with a government demonstrates this option. Relations between Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Coptic Patriarch Shenouda III, who came to power one year apart (1970 and 1971, respectively), were initially cordial. This relationship soured when Sadat chose to ally himself with more Islamist elements within Egypt, marginalizing Christians and doing little to curtail violence against members of the Coptic Church. Shenouda publicly broke with the government, and Sadat responded by stripping the Patriarch of his responsibilities and exiling him to a remote monastery, where he remained until several years into the presidency of Hosni Mubarak, Sadat's Vice-President who assumed power upon Sadat's assassination in 1981.<sup>691</sup> Despite

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<sup>688</sup> McCallum, Fiona. "The Political Role of the Patriarch in the Contemporary Middle East." *Middle Eastern Studies* 43.6. 2007:6, 927.

<sup>689</sup> Tadros, Mariz. "Vicissitudes in the Entente between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the State in Egypt (1952–2007)." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41.02. 2009: 269-287.

<sup>690</sup> McCallum 2007.

<sup>691</sup> Leustean, Lucian N., ed. *Eastern Christianity and Politics in the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge, 2014.

Mubarak's apparent hostility toward Shenouda during the former's time as Vice President, Mubarak restored the Patriarch to his previous authority within the Coptic Church in 1985.<sup>692</sup> Though the details behind Mubarak's decision have not been publicized, Shenouda responded to his release with an immediate statement of support for Mubarak and became a strong supporter of the regime; in one prominent example, Shenouda called upon Coptic Christians to vote for Mubarak in the 2005 presidential election and ordered the Church's bishops to vote for the sitting President.<sup>693</sup>

The various Ethiopian governments have been even more interventionist in the Patriarchy of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church (EOC). In 1959, the Egyptian Coptic Church, granted autocephaly (independence) to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, which had previously been subordinate to the Coptic Church.<sup>694</sup> When the 1974 Ethiopian revolution deposed Emperor Haile Selassie, who had maintained a very close relationship with the Orthodox Church as the official state church, the Marxist Derg regime soon deposed, and secretly executed, the sitting Ethiopian Patriarch as well, replacing him with more cooperative clergy.<sup>695</sup> When the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic

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<sup>692</sup> Ibid.

<sup>693</sup> Tadros 2009: 275-277, 285 fn 40.

<sup>694</sup> Angold, Michael, ed. *The Cambridge History of Christianity: Volume 5, Eastern Christianity*. Vol. 5. Cambridge University Press, 2006: 486.

<sup>695</sup> Haustein, Jörg, and Terje Østebø. "EPRDF's Revolutionary Democracy and Religious Plurality: Islam and Christianity in Post-Derg Ethiopia." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 5.4. 2011: 755-772. The Ethiopian Patriarch had in 1969 stated that "there is no state without the church and there is no church without the state. In Ethiopia church and state are one and the same" (Ibid, p149). Larebo, Haile. "The Orthodox Church and the State in the Ethiopian Revolution, 1974-84." *Religion, State and Society: The Keston Journal* 14.2 (1986): 148-159.



Front (EPRDF) overthrew the Derg government in 1991, the new regime likewise deposed the sitting Orthodox Patriarch and replaced him with a supporter of the new government.<sup>696</sup>

Shortly after these events, Eritrea peacefully seceded from Ethiopia under the rule of Isaias Afewerki, with the Eritrean branch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church soon becoming an independent denomination. The Eritrean government has kept strict control over religious organizations within the country; the Eritrean Orthodox Church is one of only four religious organizations officially permitted to operate.<sup>697</sup> The Patriarchs of the Eritrean Orthodox Church have generally refrained from criticizing or opposing the repressive regime. When one Patriarch confronted the government over interference, he was stripped of his authority, placed under house arrest, and ultimately replaced by a new Patriarch under government supervision.<sup>698</sup>

#### ***4.2.1 Internal Structure and Political Orientation of Orthodox Churches in Comparative Perspective***

To see how church structure is influencing political activity in these three countries, it is useful to compare the Orthodox churches to the smaller Catholic churches in each nation. The Orthodox and Catholic churches operate along similar episcopal church structures, but the Catholic Church is part of a larger, transnational organization that appoints the leading clergy (bishops and archbishops) in each country, limiting the

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<sup>696</sup> Haustein and Østebø 2011: 760-761.

<sup>697</sup> “Did You Know...Eritrea” *United States Commission on International Religious Freedom*. <http://www.uscirf.gov/reports-briefs/spotlight/did-you-knoweritrea> Accessed October 6, 2014.

<sup>698</sup> Ibid.

ability of national governments to influence the selection of leaders. Because these Catholic churches are smaller than their Orthodox counterparts in each country, these Catholic churches were not included in the quantitative dataset, and thus represent out of sample cases.

The small Egyptian Catholic Church (approximately 0.4% of the population in 2000) is extremely fragmented<sup>699</sup>. While the vast majority of Catholics belong to the branch of Catholicism known as Latin Rites, this branch represents one of seven distinct forms of Catholicism operating within Egypt and possessing parallel hierarchies.<sup>700</sup> The Egyptian Catholic Church has not had much involvement in the politics of the country. In Ethiopia, the Catholic Church was centralized, with the various dioceses in the country supervised by the Archdiocese of Addis Abeba. For most of the duration of the Derg government, the Archbishop of Addis Abeba was Paulos Tzadua, who was appointed by the Vatican in 1977 and retired in 1998. Although some Catholic Church facilities were expropriated by the Derg government, Archbishop Tzadua assured international relief workers that the government did not unduly interfere in Church activities.<sup>701</sup> Archbishop Tzadua, shortly after his elevation to Cardinal in 1985, described the relationship with the Derg government as “respectful distance,” noting that “the status quo is good. We're carrying out our activities freely.”<sup>702</sup> In Eritrea, the Catholic Church remains relatively

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<sup>699</sup> Johnstone et al 2001.

<sup>700</sup> World Missions Atlas Project. “Mission Atlas Project: Egypt.” <http://worldmap.org/maps/other/profiles/egypt/Egypt.pdf> Accessed October 6, 2014.

<sup>701</sup> “Ethiopia Church Action.” *Catholic Herald*. June 3, 1983.

<sup>702</sup> *Tablet*. June 8, 1985. <http://archive.thetablet.co.uk/article/8th-june-1985/12/news-in-brief>.

decentralized compared to the Ethiopian Catholic Church, though not as decentralized as the Egyptian Catholic Church. Eritrea contains four Catholic eparchies (dioceses), each headed by a bishop. These four bishops are of equal rank within the Church, having no authority over one another and all falling under the oversight of the Archeparchy (Archdiocese) of Addis Abeba, Ethiopia.<sup>703</sup> The decentralized structure of the Catholic Church within Eritrea and its links to a transnational hierarchy have limited the ability of the Eritrean government to coopt this Church. The Eritrean Catholic Church has therefore been more outspoken than its Orthodox counterpart, including issuing somewhat critical pastoral letters in 2001 and 2014.<sup>704</sup> Though the Eritrean government has censured the Catholic Church, banning its 2001 letter, there is no one official for the government to target with sanctions or inducements, and the government has not risked the ire of the worldwide Catholic Church by directly punishing the Catholic bishops, a marked difference from the treatment of the Orthodox hierarchy.<sup>705</sup>

In short, when compared to the manipulations of the Orthodox Churches, the governments of these three countries have exercised much less interference in the

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<sup>703</sup> Cheney, David M. *Catholic Hierarchy* website. [www.catholic-hierarchy.org](http://www.catholic-hierarchy.org). Accessed September 9, 2014.

<sup>704</sup> The Eritrean government censored the 2001 letter. Bayor, Ronald H., ed. *Multicultural America: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans [4 volumes]: An Encyclopedia of the Newest Americans. Vol. 2*. ABC-CLIO, 2011. 627. See also "Four Eritrean Catholic Bishops Issue Letter Decrying Immigration." TesfaNews. <http://www.tesfanews.net/four-eritrean-catholic-bishops-issue-pastoral-letter-decrying-emigration/> Accessed October 6, 2014.

<sup>705</sup> Hepner, Tricia Redeker. "Religion, Nationalism, and Transnational Civil Society in the Eritrean Diaspora." *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power* 10.3. 2003: 290 fn 15.

hierarchies of their nations' Catholic Churches, which are appointed from above and answerable to the Vatican. The Catholic leadership of these countries has thus been allowed to exhibit exogenously determined variation in the degree to which they are centralized, with the expected correlation between centralization and relations with government. The Ethiopian Catholic Church has been the most centralized of the three, and has had cordial if not particularly close relations with even the atheistic Derg government. In contrast, the decentralized Eritrean Catholic Church has been critical of the government, which is especially noteworthy given the generalized repression of dissent that exists within the country.

#### ***4.3 Internal Structure and Political Orientation of African Initiated and Protestant Churches***

The African-founded denominations, the Zion Christian Church of South Africa and the Zimbabwe Assemblies of God Africa, are even more centralized and less accountable in their leadership than the Orthodox Churches. The ZCC has been led by its founding Bishop, Ezekiel Guti, since the Church's founding in 1924. In the decades since the Church's founding, Guti's stature has increased, as he has established international patronage networks that allow him to dominate the administration within the Church and developed a cult of personality around himself.<sup>706</sup> As Guti's Church grew through aggressive evangelization tactics to become the largest denomination in the country, the ZAOGA distanced itself from the independence struggle of the 1970s. When white rule ended and Robert Mugabe assumed power, the new ZANU-PF

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<sup>706</sup> Maxwell, David. "'Catch the Cockerel Before Dawn': Pentecostalism and Politics in Post-colonial Zimbabwe." *Africa* 70.02. 2000: 254, 265.

government was initially hostile toward the ZAOGA. Although ZAOGA initially tried to ingratiate itself to the new government by cooperating in various development projects, ZANU-PF viewed the Church's size and organization as a threat to the ruling party's dominance, which was exacerbated by the fact that Guti, and the people he placed in positions of authority around him, were members of the Ndaue ethnic group, who were the base of support for a rival faction of ZANU.<sup>707</sup>

In the 1990s, however, as the government struggled with various economic and political problems within the country and found itself criticized by mainline denominations like the Catholic Church, ZANU-PF and ZAOGA established a mutually beneficial relationship of reciprocal support. The Church gave Mugabe and other high-ranking ZANU-PF officials platforms to engage in political campaigning and allowed the President to shed his former Marxist ideology in favor of a born-again Christian image. The Church also publicly supported Mugabe by providing moral backing for the President's homophobic and sexist comments, and Guti himself has told his church that "every church leader must support the Government and pray for the Government."<sup>708</sup> In exchange for the Church's support, the government provided support for the ZAOGA and particularly for its Archbishop. Mugabe used his authority to convince Kenyan President Moi to allow the ZAOGA to expand to Kenya, as well as providing Guti the opportunity to personally preach his message in China.<sup>709</sup> Mugabe appointed Guti as one of the 395 delegates tasked with rewriting Zimbabwe's Constitution in 1999, placing the

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<sup>707</sup> Ibid: 257, 265.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid: 263, 271.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid: 264.

ZAOGA leader alongside his counterparts from other denominations such as the Catholic Church who also sat on the commission.<sup>710</sup> Guti has touted his personal access to President Mugabe as a way of further strengthening the church leader's authority and prestige within the ZAOGA. The Church's centralized, authoritarian leadership, centered on the person of Ezekiel Guti, made it relatively easy for the government to target Guti with beneficial policies as a successful tactic for coopting Guti's denomination into the ruling party infrastructure.

The Zion Christian Church (ZCC) of South Africa has had a similarly concentrated and personalistic leadership. The church was initially dominated by its founding prophet, Engenas Lekganyane, who emerged from Pentecostal movements within South Africa to start his own religious movement, and leadership has past through inheritance to the founder's son, Edward, and then to Edward's son, Barnabas; the latter was only twelve years old when he inherited the title of "holy prophet" from his father.<sup>711</sup> The elder Lekganyane based his authority on supernatural abilities, mainly the power to heal the sick, an ability that he insisted flowed through him alone and could not be independently practiced by other leaders within the church.<sup>712</sup> Lekganyane also claimed to be able to predict the future.<sup>713</sup> Though Edward and Barnabas placed less emphasis on

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<sup>710</sup> Ibid: 272.

<sup>711</sup> Harber, Anton, and Barbara Ludman, eds. *A-Z of South African Politics: The Essential Handbook*, 1995. Penguin Books, 1995: 50.

<sup>712</sup> A. Anderson 1999: 290.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid: 288.

charismatic gifts such as healing, they were still viewed by their followers as having inherited from the founder special supernatural powers and direct access to God.

The Church's growth, from a few hundred followers to millions, has led various government officials to seek the denominations support. Like the ZAOGA in white-dominated Rhodesia, the ZCC refused to join other black-led denominations in opposing white rule in apartheid-era South Africa. Indeed, the ZCC maintained good relations with various South African National Party governments, including inviting various political figures to the Church's Easter celebrations.<sup>714</sup> Due to their command of the millions of ZCC followers, the Lekganyanes have become powerbrokers within South Africa, with various politicians attempting to win the Church's endorsement. In 1992, for example, the leaders of all three major parties in South Africa (Nelson Mandela, F.W. de Klerk and Mangasuthu Buthelez) all accepted the Bishop's invitation to attend the ZCC's Easter celebration.<sup>715</sup> President P.W. Botha had previously been a guest at one of the Church's Easter services, and the Mandela and Mbeki governments valued the friendly relations they enjoyed with the ZCC.

The mainline protestant churches in this sample were also centralized, placing national-level authority in a single individual. The leaders of these churches, however, faced greater accountability than their counterparts in the denominations discussed above, with regular turnover in their leadership. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Namibia (ELCIN), by far the largest of three separate Lutheran denominations operating in Namibia, emerged from the work of Finnish Lutheran missionaries among the Ovambo

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<sup>714</sup> Ibid: 292.

<sup>715</sup> Ibid: 294.

and Kavango people in Namibia. The ELCIN partnered with the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) during the struggle for Namibian independence from South Africa. After SWAPO became the ruling party of Namibia at independence in 1990, the ELCIN reportedly maintained good relations with the government. This impression is largely based on the inaction of the denomination rather than its actions – those criticizing the ELCIN point to its failure to criticize the government more than to positive statements or actions performed by the church. The cordial relationship mainly remained after founding Namibian President Sam Nujoma was succeeded by Hifikepunye Pohamba, although the ELCIN leadership took a few actions to distance itself from explicitly supporting SWAPO.<sup>716</sup> The Botswana Synod of the United Congregational Church of Southern Africa (UCCSA) is the largest church in that country. In the 1990s, the UCCSA and several other major denominations in the country “tended to be implicit supporters of the government.”<sup>717</sup>

In short, the non-Catholic churches in my dataset all feature centralized leadership, which has facilitated at least cordial relationships with their governments. For the highly centralized and hierarchical Orthodox Churches, their structure has allowed for significant cooptation and control of their top leaders by a succession of diverse

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<sup>716</sup> For example, the denomination banned its congregations from flying the flags of any political party, leading to a controversy when a SWAPO veteran's family was denied the right to drape their relative's coffin with the party's flag during a funeral service in a local ELCIN church. The denomination defended the decision by stating that the Church's members belong to various political parties and that the church did not want to face division. Oswald Shivute. “ELCIN Bans Party Flags” *The Namibian*. September 28, 2010.

<sup>717</sup> Wuthnow, Robert, ed. *The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion: 2-Volume Set*. Routledge, 2013: 75.



governments. The African initiated churches display leadership centered on the churches' founder or his descendents. This dynastic leadership structure does not allow governments to choose the churches' leaders, but it does present clear targets for government cooptation. In contrast, the mainline Protestant churches are less authoritarian in their leadership structures, and thus their good relations with their respective governments have taken the form of friendly coexistence rather than active cooptation.

## **5 Conclusion**

The main contribution of this dissertation is to establish that internal organizational structure matters for understanding organizations' political activities, even when examining highly ideological organizations such as churches. This significance of organizational features such as leadership centralization, internal democracy and accountability mechanisms is evident in the qualitative case studies of churches in Kenya, the quantitative analyses of church political orientation across Africa, and the brief qualitative vignettes of churches contained in the quantitative data sets. Furthermore, the impact of organizational structure is not only significant but also substantial, even taking into account factors such as ethnicity and religion that have previously been identified as paramount to political calculation in Africa and elsewhere. Thus we see the Kikuyu dominated Presbyterian Church of Kenya maintaining friendly relationships with the Moi government even as the Kikuyu are being largely marginalized from Kenyan politics. Similarly as discussed above, we observe the leaders of the Egyptian Coptic church actively supporting the authoritarian Muslim president of Egypt, and the dynastic

leadership of the Zion Christian Church maintaining equally friendly relations with apartheid era rulers and post-apartheid ANC presidents alike.

Additionally, the evidence suggests that governments realize that structure matters. This has been evident in the histories of political and economic actors such as labor unions, as has been well-documented in the literature on corporatism, for example. By demonstrating that these structural factors have political impact even for religious organizations, as well as showing that governments both seem to realize this and strategically employ this knowledge in their relations with churches, this dissertation shows the widespread importance of structural factors in understanding the relationships between governments and non governmental actors more generally. When governments can manipulate the internal structures of organizations, they do so in ways that increase the centralization and hierarchal nature of the organizations in order to make them easier to control, as seen, for example, throughout the history of the various Orthodox churches in Africa. When confronted with existing hierarchal and centralized organizations, governments seek to coopt or otherwise develop mutually advantageous relationships with these organization's leaders and may even interfere with the leadership selection process in order to place friendly individuals atop the existing organizational hierarchy. And when faced with multiple organizations that vary in their internal structure, as has been the case for Kenyan governments interacting with Christian churches, governments will strategically choose which organizations to engage or target for cooptation.

Furthermore, while internal structure has a significant impact on political activities by shaping interactions between organizations and governments, the specific preferences of these actors also matter. This dissertation has therefore detailed the

preferences of both churches and governments in greater detail than existing works in order to better understand church-state relations. By examining African churches in particular, this study expands the social and geographical scope of the political economy of religion literature, exploring how churches and governments interact outside of relatively well-studied regions such as Western Europe and the Americas.

These insights are important for a number of reasons. For scholars of religion, particularly those who examine religious actors from a rationalist perspective, this study advances our understanding of how such actor's preferences are translated into actions. For religious practitioners, this study demonstrates ways in which secular factors interact with and sometimes even overwhelm, religious motivation. Finally, this study is valuable for those who care about civil society, either as a topic of scholarship or as a normatively important actor in political life. For societies that are developed or developing, economically and politically, the impact of organization's internal structure on interactions with government is important for the ability of organizations to successfully lobby or negotiate the government. Additionally, for nations struggling with economic and political development, identifying the mechanisms by which governments coopt civil society organizations is an important scholarly pursuit and can help civil society actors structure their organizations in ways that allow them to remain independent. Future research can further explore the mechanisms I have identified for Christian churches and other religious actors, as well as for various secular civil society organizations. And for practitioners – members of religious organizations, human rights activists, labor unionists, and many others – this research will be useful as they develop strategies and tactics for pursuing their various political and societal goals.

## Appendix 1: Kenyan Church Profiles

**Catholic Church.** The Catholic Church made initial contact with Kenya as early as 1498, and has had a significant missionary presence in the country since 1889.<sup>718</sup> The church is present throughout the country and currently estimates over 8 million members.<sup>719</sup> The Catholic Church in Kenya, as in the rest of the world, is organized based on an Episcopal structure.<sup>720</sup> This is a hierarchical system under which local bodies of believers (called parishes in Catholicism) are subordinate to larger units known as dioceses. Individual dioceses are under the supervision of an archdiocese, and the entire worldwide structure is government from the Vatican. Each subordinate unit is governed by a single ordained individual who is appointed from above and enjoy near-lifetime appointments<sup>721</sup> – parish priests, bishops, archbishops. The top official in the entire church is the Pope, who upon

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<sup>718</sup> Baur, John. *The Catholic Church in Kenya: A Centenary History*. St. Paul Publications. 1990. 25.

<sup>719</sup> Historical information and current membership data from the Kenya Episcopal Conference website, <http://www.kec.or.ke>.

<sup>720</sup> There are generally three ideal types of church polity: Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational. These structures differ in the concentration or diffusion of authority within each level of church administration. Episcopal churches (such as the Catholic, Anglican and Orthodox denominations) place leadership and decision-making authority within single individuals: the local church unit, a parish, is headed by a priest; various parishes collectively form a diocese, lead by a bishop; and the dioceses of a country are grouped under one or more archdioceses, each administered by an archbishop. In the Presbyterian model, at each level of administration, authority rests with a representative body (this body often holding the name “presbytery”), culminating in a General Assembly or similar national legislative body. In the Congregational model, local decision-making authority rests within the entire membership of the local congregation, who generally make decisions based on some form of democratic procedure. Though individual congregations may elect officials to represent them in regional or national bodies, decisions made at these higher levels are generally not binding at the local level.

<sup>721</sup> Diocesan bishops, for example, are required by Roman Catholic Church Canon Law 401 to resign at age 75 or if he is rendered unfit for service by ill health or another reason. [http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/\\_PID.HTM](http://www.intratext.com/IXT/ENG0017/_PID.HTM)

the death of the previous Pope is elected by a two-thirds majority vote of the College of Cardinals, a subset of the Church's Bishops.

The Second Vatican Council (1965-1967) of the worldwide Catholic Church made various reforms that increased the role of the church in politics, including the establishment of national Episcopal Conferences made up of the Catholic bishops of individual countries.<sup>722</sup> An Episcopal Conference was to meet in a Plenary Assembly, choose conference leaders from among the Bishops themselves and collectively decide on the church's stance concerning issues within the country.<sup>723</sup> The Catholic Church of Kenya adopted this organizational model, thus injecting a "relatively democratic" system of decision-making (among the Bishops at least) in an otherwise hierarchical system.<sup>724</sup> The hierarchy in Kenya itself was decentralized in 1990 when the Dioceses of Mombasa, Nyeri and Kisumu were elevated to the status of Archdioceses. No longer under the supervision of Nairobi, these new units would operate autonomously of one another and each have supervision over several dioceses in the country.

**Anglican Church of Kenya.** Founded in 1844 by the British Church Missionary Society (CMS), the Anglican Church also maintains a significant presence throughout the country, though smaller compared to the Catholics. Total membership today is almost 2

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<sup>722</sup> For the political impact of Vatican II, see Huntington, Samuel. *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*. University of Oklahoma Press. 1993: 78.

<sup>723</sup> Roman Catholic Church Code of Canon Law. Canons 447-459. [http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/\\_P1L.HTM](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG1104/_P1L.HTM)

<sup>724</sup> Ngunyi 1995: 155.

million.<sup>725</sup> The church is organized along an Episcopal model similar to that of the Catholic Church, but with a few important differences that decrease the hierarchical and undemocratic implications of this polity. First, bishops are chosen within a diocese by election by the synod (governing council) of the diocese, though elected bishops must be approved by the national leadership. Second, bishops enjoy considerable autonomy. The Anglican Archbishop does not govern the country's bishops, but serves as a first among equals. Technically, the highest level of governance in the Anglican Church of Kenya rests with the Provincial Synod, made up of elected representatives of the various dioceses, and the House of Bishops, but in practice most decisions and actions are decided at the diocesan level.<sup>726</sup>

**Africa Inland Church (AIC).** Founded by American missionaries in 1895, the AIC now operates as an independent church not subordinated to or affiliated with any denomination outside of Kenya, though it does still retain financial and personnel ties with the Africa Inland Mission. The church does not identify with a particular denomination outside of the country, but its governing structure operates according to the Presbyterian model. The leading official of the church is a Presiding Bishop, who is elected by the Church's ordained pastors for a term of 5 years.

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<sup>725</sup> Though the official ACK website gives a membership figure of 5 million, the sum of estimated members of each diocese, gathered from the website and personal interviews, gives a figure of 1.7 million

<sup>726</sup> Sabar2002: 12-14, 295.

**Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA).** The Church of Scotland Mission (CSM) landed in Kenya in 1891 and began the PCEA (which also contains a few congregations in Uganda and Tanzania). It remains most concentrated in central Kenya. As its name suggests, the PCEA operates according to a Presbyterian polity. This is similar to an Episcopal structure, except that at each administrative level (parish, presbytery, national), authority rests with a governing board instead of a single individual. Membership in each board comes from representatives of the level of administration immediately lower. The highest decision-making power in the church is the General Assembly, made up of representatives from the country's various presbyteries. The top official for the church, the Moderator, is elected by two-thirds vote of the General Assembly for a 3-year term, once renewable. Since the position of Moderator was established in its current form in 1961, every person holding the office has served two terms. The church remains heavily concentrated among the GEMA<sup>727</sup> ethnic groups.

**Seventh-Day Adventists (SDA).** Founded in the region surrounding Lake Nyanza, the SDA church still draws around half of its membership from this region, which is home to groups such as the Luo and Luhya. The Adventist Church is an international organization with a worldwide leadership structure, leading up to its world headquarters in Silver Spring, Maryland. The church is known for being very bureaucratic in its leadership and organizational structure.<sup>728</sup> Leadership selection is mixed between

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<sup>727</sup> The umbrella term for three related ethnic groups, the G(K)ikuyu, Embu and Meru.

<sup>728</sup> Nyaundi, Nehemiah. *Religion and Social Change: A Sociological Study of Seventh-Day Adventism in Kenya*. Lund University Press. 1993: 250.

elections at the various administrative levels and appointments from above. The top official in Kenya, the Executive Director, is appointed from above. The Adventist Church is notable because of its extensive extra-biblical beliefs and regulations, largely based on the teachings of founding Adventist Ellen G. White and detailed in a Church Manual updated periodically by the Church. One relevant belief of Adventists is separation from secular government. “Due to the official adventist view of church and state, its relationship to the state in Kenya is a distant one, being neither openly friendly nor openly hostile”, but as of the 1980s “the gap between adventists and the state [was] narrowing.”<sup>729</sup>

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<sup>729</sup> Nyaundi 1993: 208.



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